

KARAGÖZ

TURKISH SHADOW THEATRE

by Metin And



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KARAGÖZ
TURKISH SHADOW THEATRE



Dandy (Çelebi)



Persian (Acem)



Arab



Hacivat-Karagöz



Drun kard (Matiz)



Dame (Zenne)



Negro Musician



Dancer



Opium-Smoker

Metin And

KARAGÖZ

TURKISH SHADOW THEATRE

WITH AN APPENDIX ON THE HISTORY OF TURKISH PUPPET THEATRE



Art Editor: Salim Şengil





A performance of Karagöz in a coffee-house

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P R E F A C E

The nature of Turkish shadow theatre, which grew out of many artistic traditions, has fascinated and baffled generations of travellers to the Middle East, and Karagöz has attracted to itself a considerable number of enthusiastic scholars.

Considering the growing interest in puppet and shadow theater, throughout the world this study has a relevance that makes the book of interest to the general reader as well as to the specialist. Recently there has been a reawakening of interest in Asiatic shadow theater.

Today, many of traditional popular dramatic forms, in particular Karagöz, have been absorbed into or replaced by radio, movies and television, the medias of contemporary mass culture. And it is certain that at this time, when the theatre, an art which perpetually renews itself, is looking for new means of expression, the example of Karagöz will be particularly immediate and of great help.

The author would like to thank all those scholars, particularly Georg Jacob, Theodor Menzel, Ignaz Kunos and Hellmut Ritter, who have devoted themselves with enthusiasm to the study of the Karagöz. While it was timely that particular aspects of Karagöz received the attention of these scholars, their monographs are invariably concerned with the form as folk-literature, ignoring the transformation of the material to theatre, and throwing but little light on the theatrical qualities inherent in the Turkish shadow theatre. The present work does in some measure remedy this defect, with the recognition that before anything else Karagöz is a theatrical form, and the distribution of emphasis was decided partly by this basic disciplinary bias. Although the material presented is based partly on works already published and on facts already known, with no attempt having been made to draw up a set of definitive conclusions, it yet presents a radically new approach to the subject.



INTRODUCTION: Four Traditions of Theatre in Turkey

Theatrical art in Turkey is currently believed to have developed from the same religious, moral and educational urge to imitate human actions that accompanied its growth in other countries, particularly in ancient Greece. The shadow theatre, which involves two-dimensional figures casting its shadow on a two-dimensional area of screen, had an important place in Turkey as well as throughout the larger area of the Ottoman Empire. To understand its place let us glance at four main traditions of theatre in Turkey. These are the "folk theatre tradition", the "popular theatre tradition", the "court theatre tradition", and the "western theatre tradition". In order to understand the significance of Turkish shadow theatre, these deserve special brief study.¹

1. The Folk Theatre Tradition.

The Turkish peasantry, which constitutes about three quarters of the whole population, is the most homogenous and articulate element of the nation, and has throughout many centuries, retained its own peculiar character. The isolation of Turkish villages has caused the preservation, in their unique forms, of traditional peasant dances, puppet shows and plays. During public festivals, a type of crude drama sometimes accompanies the singing, dancing and mime. This is most likely a legacy from ancient religious rites, handed down from generation to generation. Maybe it originated in the shamanistic rituals of the Ural-Altaic region, which was the birthplace of the Turkish people, or perhaps it was part of the folklore of the Phrygian or Hittite civilizations of Anatolia. It is also thought that many of the Anatolian peasant plays originated from festivals honoring such gods as Dionysios, Attis and Osiris, or from the Egyptian mysteries celebrated in Eleusis and other places.² These dramas frequently display symbolic elements.

Although today these plays are, almost without exception, no more than mere diversions, they frequently display symbolic elements. Because of gradual additions, innovations and corrup-

¹ The only detailed history of these traditions is my study *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey* (Ankara, 1963-64).

² On the ritualistic aspects of Turkish folk theater, see Metin And, *Dionisos ve Anadolu Köylüsü* (Istanbul, 1962).



A scene from folk drama
(Swaz)



A scene from folk drama
(Muş-Malazgirt)

tions throughout the centuries, and augmentations or reductions in the cast of characters, no standard versions of these plays exist.

There are two chief incidents upon which all the folk dramas are based. The first is deadly battle, in which one of the combatants is killed and subsequently restored to life, either with the help of a doctor or through magic. This may very well be a survival of such vegetation cults as the festival of Dionysios, wherein the god of vegetation was killed, or it may derive from the days when an aged king was slain in order to give new life to the soil. There is no question that this theme is a dramatized symbol of the waning year and its rebirth as the new one.

The second incident concerns the abduction of a girl and her eventual return to a grieving mother, relatives and friends. This is undoubtedly an adaptation of the tale of Persephone's abduction by Pluto, and her subsequent reunion with her mother, Demeter. This symbolizes the annual vegetation cycle, or death followed by life, as was enacted at Eleusis.

In these folk dramas there is general lamentation by the villagers at the death of the combatant, or the abduction of the girl, followed by rejoicing at the former's resurrection or the latter's return. Three main sequences usually seen within these elaborate seasonal ceremonies are: (a) The battle or contest; (b) a procession or quest; (c) the drama itself, enacted by impersonation and animal mimicry.

The first sequence, frequently mimed, shows a battle between groups or individuals. This is a survival of ancient phallic rites in which opponents confronted each other in such symbolic struggles as that between life and death, light and darkness, summer and winter, the waning and the new year, father and son, or the old king and the young. Anatolian peasant dramas often include Arab, a black-faced individual, dressed in a black goat or sheepskin, who represents night or winter. His opponent, in emphatic contrast, is usually white-bearded and wears a white goat or sheepskin.

The procession or quest sequence shows men either wearing animal skins, or with blackened faces, moving from house to house. The play that follows may take place inside or in front of one of the houses, and sometimes includes dancing and singing. Nearly all of them display such common features as blackened faces, following the tradition of Greek mysteries where the actors covered their faces with soot. Other shared characteristics, which suggest the ancient rites of Dionysios, are the use of animal masks the wearing of fox tails, goatskins or sheepskins; phallus processions enlivened by mock sexual intercourse, or an old woman carrying a cradle. Even the actors' roles are sometimes transferred to people in animal disguises.³

³ On these folk dramas see Alessio Bombaci, "Rappresentazioni drammatiche di Anatolia", *Oriens*, xvi (1963), 171-193, and Metin And, *Oyun ve Bugün*, (Istanbul, 1974).

Every region in Turkey, every village even has its own dance. In all, these number around fifteen hundred, and some are in the nature of pantomime. The five general categories in which these may be placed are: the dramatization of animal actions; the everyday routine of village life; the exaltation of nature; combat (with or without weapons), and courtship.⁴

Even today these Turkish folk dramas, puppet performances and dances contain a vast source of artistic energy, which must be exploited if Turkey is to build up a strong national theatrical tradition.

2. The Popular Theater Tradition.

The Turkish theater developed in two distinct geographical areas: in old Istanbul and other cities, and in the villages. Popular theater⁵ was a pastime of the urban middle class. It was presented to the public by three classes of professional performers: live actors; storytellers and puppeteers (both shadow and marionette). Its characteristic traits were imitation and mimicry of dialectic peculiarities, and imitation of animals by stock characters called *taklit*, easily recognized by the audience because of their standard costumes and signature tunes and dances. The comedian, puppeteer and storyteller memorized certain stock phrases (some in rhymed couplets) and enacted scenes from everyday life, using the colorful idiom of their time. They relied very little on properties and hardly at all on scenery. Men played women's parts. Performances were given, not in special buildings set apart for the purpose, but wherever they could be accommodated – in public squares, at national and religious festivals, at weddings and fairs, in the yards of inns, in coffee houses, in taverns and in private residences. Everything was done to music: wrestling matches were carried on to musical accompaniment, conjurers performed to the sound of the tambourine. The plays had little or no action, depending for laughs on lively slapstick and on monologues or dialogues involving puns, ready responses, crude practical jokes, double meanings, misunderstandings, and interpolated quips. There were clearly formulated rules of intonation. Performances were often interspersed with songs or dances, or both.

Virtually nothing is known of popular theater under the Anatolian Turks between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. The Byzantine Emperor Manuel Palaeologos II records his impression of his visit to Sultan Beyazit's court sometime before 1407 and mentions companies of musicians, singers, dancers and actors.⁶ A very early description of a Turkish dramatic



16th century miniature representing famous story teller Lâlin Kaba (Boston, The Museum of Fine Arts)



A detail from painting of Giovanni Brinidesi depicting a story teller.

⁴ See Metin And, *Dances of Anatolian Turkey* (New York, 1959).

⁵ See Metin And, *Geleneksel Türk Tiyatrosu* (Ankara, 1969). A brief, pioneer work (inaccurate in places, unfortunately) on the subject is N. Martinovitch's *The Turkish Theatre* (New York, 1933).

⁶ See M.C.B. Hase, "D'un ouvrage de l'Empereur Manuel Paleologue, intitulé: Entretiens avec un Professeur Mahometan", *Notices et Extraits*, viii (Paris, 1810), 2 pt. 320 nr. 3.



Scenes from early
Ortaoyunu performances.
(18th century miniatures)



Scene from Ortaoyunu
(19th century)

performance may be found in the epic prose poem, *The Alexiad* of Anna Comnena, the eldest daughter of the Emperor Alexius Comnenus, who describes in the following words how the actors at the Seljuk court ridiculed her father who was suffering from gout:

"Never before had the Emperor suffered so severely from that pain... and the Emperor's suffering in his feet, and the trouble in his feet, became the subject of comedies. First they would impersonate the Emperor, then they would depict the Emperor himself lying on a couch, and make play of it. These puerile games aroused much laughter among the barbarians."⁷

This description gives an idea of some manifestations of the dramatic instinct of the Seljuk Turks in the twelfth century. Prior to *ortaoyunu*, which is the Turkish *commedia dell'arte*, traces of Turkish dramatic art could be found in farces, impromptu productions based on the humorous possibilities of rudimentary situations, characters and costumes. Animal mimicry played an important part in these productions, the deer being a principal character.⁸ There were also occasional farces performed in the streets, wherever there was an audience or onlookers ready to take part. These were often pre-arranged comic situations, worked out in front of shops and houses largely through improvisations with practical jokes inserted on the spur of the moment. Players, impersonating officials such as watchmen, tax collectors and treasure hunters, teased shopkeepers with practical jokes to obtain money from them.⁹

As time went on all these coarse and crude farces, whether *Kol Oyunu* (company plays), or *Meydan Oyunu* (plays in the round), or *Taklit Oyunu* (mimicry plays), became associated with the *Ortaoyunu*. Before the influence of the European theater, a raised platform was never used as a stage by these performers. The dancing girls and boys were much like actors and actresses performing for the amusement of the onlookers. They came from different guilds and companies called *kol* or *cemaat*. Anyone who has ever seen the shadow play, *Karagöz*, will have noted the similarity between its characters, its comic elements, its atmosphere, and those of the *Ortaoyunu*.¹⁰

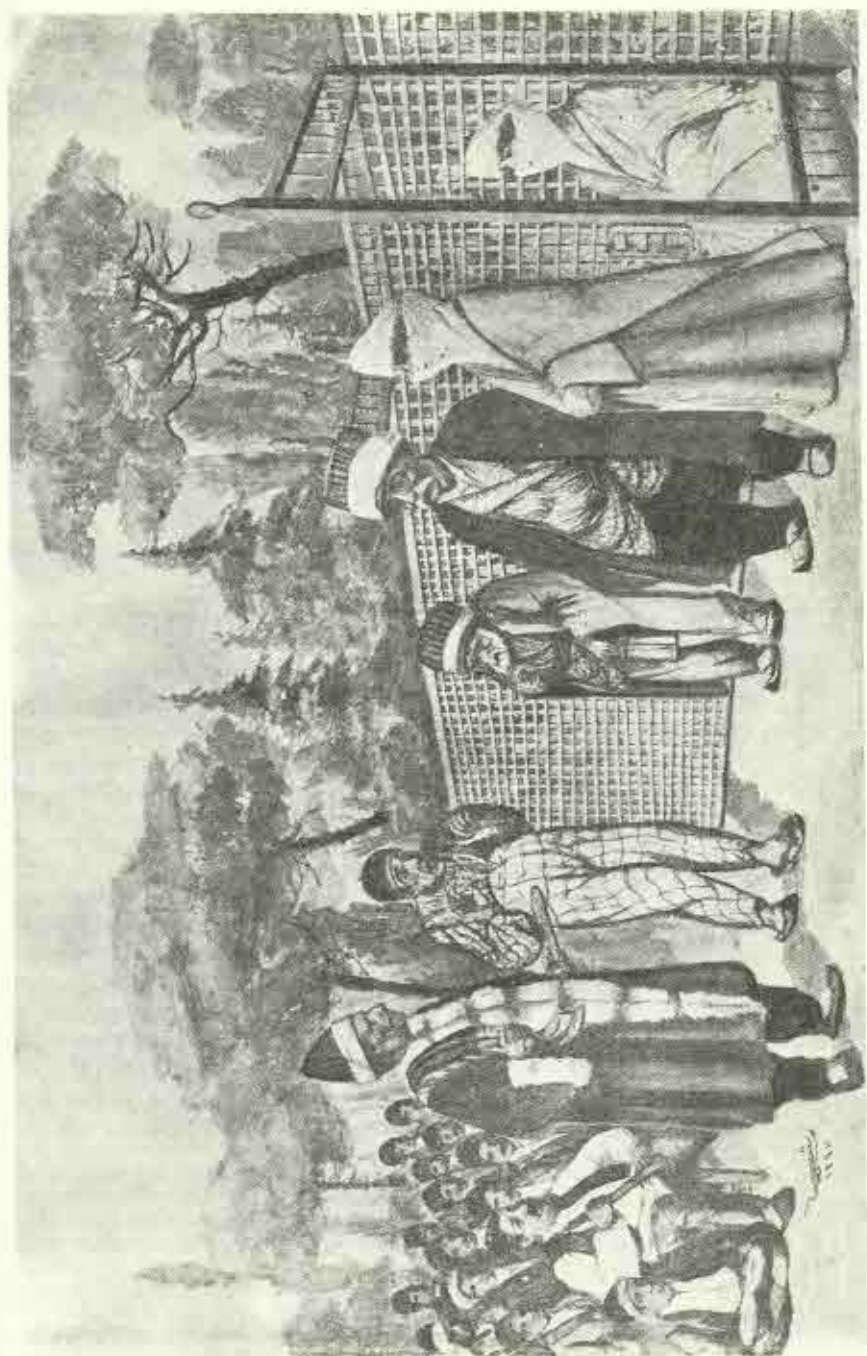
The only difference is that one medium uses puppets and the other live actors. Under western influence, the rich tradition

⁷ Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad*, tr. E. Dawe (London, 1626), pp. 390-391.

⁸ For a contemporary account of these presentations, see James T. Bent, ed., "Dr. John Covel's Diary (1670-1679)," *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant* (London, 1893), pp. 215-216, and Gerhard Cornelius von den Driesch, *Historia Magnae Legationis Caesareae suspectae per Damian Hugo Virmondium* (Vienna, 1721), pp. 454-457.

⁹ See *Memoirs of Baron de Tott Containing the State of the Turkish and the Crimea*... (London, 1786) I, 136-137, 174-176.

¹⁰ For the origin of *Ortaoyunu* see Metin And, "Wie entstand das Türkische Ortaoyunu", *Maske und Kothurn*, xvi (1970), 201-216. See also Alessio Bombaci, "Ortaoyunu", *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, LVI (1960), 285-297.



A scene from an Orlaoynu performance.



Scene from *Ortaoyunu*
(20th century)

of *Ortaoyunu* later fell into decay and was eventually transformed into a different kind of improvised theater called *Tulûat*.

Because of its form of expression and the special nature of its rapport with the audience, *Ortaoyunu* can be called presentational or non-illusionistic. The actor does not lose his identity as an actor and shows his awareness of this to the audience. The audience does not regard him as pretending to be a real person but as an actor. The acting area is not separated from the audience, there is no line between them, and no transparent fourth wall. The play is performed with hardly any scenery at all in a circle where the audience surrounds the actors. The principal comic character occasionally violates the traditional dramatic conventions. *Ortaoyunu* performances (like the shadow theater and storytelling) have no plots in the Aristotelian sense. They have, to use the current terminology, 'open form'. They are loose, episodic structures which do not require the compulsive attention of the audiences. Each episode is independent; consequently, in different performances, the episodes can be interchanged, added to or subtracted from, according to the audience's reaction or the puppeteer's or actor's decision, without upsetting the general course of the action. Surviving titles and scenarii show resemblances and close parallels between *Karagöz* and *Ortaoyunu* plots.¹¹

The second form of the popular theater tradition is the dramatic story told by a single speaker called the *Meddah* (literally, praise-giver or panegyrist), a clever impersonator who "does" many characters with appropriate gestures, voice modulations and accents.¹²

The third form of the popular theater is puppetry, including both shadow theater (*Karagöz*) which constitutes the subject of this present book, and puppet and marionette theater.¹³

3. The Court Theatre Tradition.

Unlike most Asiatic countries, Turkey has no individualized and distinctive court theater tradition. Until the Westernized period, court theater simply imitated popular theater. The customary entertainers attendant upon mediaeval rulers all over Anatolia had, of course, been active. The courts were the patrons of companies, dancers, actors, storytellers, clowns, puppet masters and conjurers. They would perform only for the aristocracy of the palace, hence they were more refined and literary. But the court sustained theatrical entertainment outside the palace as

¹¹ Three *Ortaoyunu* scripts have been edited and published by the present writer. See *Kavuklu Hamdi'den Üç Ortaoyunu* (Ankara, 1962). Cevdet Kudret collected and edited the *Ortaoyunu* scripts in two volumes. Only the first volume has been published. This contains 9 scenarios. See, *Ortaoyunu* (Ankara, 1973).

¹² On the *Meddah*, see Georg Jacob, *Vorträge Türkischer Meddah* (Leipzig, 1923).

¹³ For a scholarly study on Turkish puppets, see Otto Spies, *Türkisches Puppentheater* (Emsdetten/Westf., 1959).

well. The birth of a new prince or his circumcision, a court marriage, the accession of a new ruler, triumph in a war, departure for a new conquest, arrival of a welcome foreign ambassador or guest, provided occasions for public festivities sometimes lasting as long as forty days and nights¹⁴. These served the double purpose of amusing the courtiers and the people, and impressing the world at large by a display of magnificence. The festivities included not only processions, illuminations, fireworks, equestrian games and hunting, but also dancing, music, poetic recitations, and performances by jugglers, mountebanks and buffoons. Pageants were given on gaudy wagons or on ordinary carts fitted with large-canopied platforms, each carrying a guild group performing scenes appropriate to its trade or representing a characteristic setting. The artistic power of which the Turks gave proof on such occasions was attained only by means of that free intercourse between all classes that formed the basis of Turkish society. With the Western influences at the beginning of 19th century, the Sultans started building theatres in their palaces. Sultan Abdülmecit built a theatre in the neighbourhood of the Dolmabahçe Palace in 1858, and Abdülhamit built a theatre in 1889 in his Yıldız Palace. This latter building has survived. In these, theatrical and operatic performances were given, employing professional or amateur players. In 1909, Abdülhamit was dethroned and the palace theater was abandoned after only a few performances.¹⁵



Interior of Dolmabahçe Palace Theatre.

4. The Western Theater Tradition.

The development of Turkish western tradition is fairly recent, and can be conveniently divided into three periods, which are phases not only determined by theatrical developments but also by political and constitutional changes: (a) The first, from 1839 to 1908 can be called the Tanzimat and İstibdat Period, that is the 'Reorganization' and 'Despotism'; (b) the second is from 1908 to 1923, the period of the Revolution of 1908; and (c) the third is from 1923 to the present day and can be called the Republican period.

(a)¹⁶ In 1839, a vast plan of reforms, issued under the name of the Royal Decree of Gülhane, marks a fundamental constitutio-

¹⁴ For a detailed and well illustrated study on the Ottoman Festivals, see Metin And, *Kırk Gün Kırk Gece* (Istanbul, 1959). For a monograph on the famous Ottoman Festival in 1582, see Robert E. Stout, *The Sür-i Hümayun of Murad III: A Study of Ottoman Pageantry and Entertainment* (unpublished doctoral dissertation). For a summary of this study see R. Elliot Stout, "An Ottoman Festival", *The Ohio State University Theatre Collection Bulletin*, 1967, no. 14, pp.30-42. For a monograph on the Ottoman Festival in 1675, see Özdemir Nutku, *IV. Mehmet'in Edirne Şenliği*, (Ankara, 1972).

¹⁵ For a contemporary account of the palace theater see "Das Hoftheater eines Sultans", *Tagliche Rundschau*, 23 May 1909, no. 237. Also see Ernesto Rossi, *Quarant'anni di vita artistica* (Firenze, 1890), III, 218-219.

¹⁶ The fundamental introductory work on this period is by Metin And, *Tanzimat ve İstibdat Döneminde Türk Tiyatrosu (1839-1908)*, (Ankara, 1972).



Exterior of Gedikpaşa Theatre.

nal change in the history of Turkey. That same year, four theatre buildings were built in Istanbul. The Armenians and Levantines of Istanbul gave Turkey its first experience of Western theater in the Turkish language and generally adapted it to a taste nurtured by the indigenous popular theater. Before the Armenian activity started, it was only in the private residences of foreign embassy personnel that western dramatic art was known in Turkey, performed exclusively by visiting European theater and opera companies employing their own languages. By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, however, the Istanbul Armenians had established two companies that sought a wider Turkish audience. First, a company called Şark ('The Orient') and later another company called 'Vaspuragan' came into existence, performing, translating and adapting European plays for bilingual performance, that is both in Armenian and Turkish.

The most important effort in this Armeno-Turkish development was that made by the Ottoman Theater Company at the Gedikpaşa Theater in Istanbul. Headed by an Armenian named Agop Vartovyan (Güllü Agop), that company prepared the way for a genuinely national Turkish theater by introducing Turkish actors, by giving them salaries under contract, and by performing original Turkish plays. Even when they did not play leading parts, Turkish actors were used to correct the pronunciation of Armenian performers even as Turkish writers were employed to perfect the idiom of translations thus making them stageworthy. Turkish youths in the universities also became interested and gave assistance to the theater, as did many Turkish politicians and statesmen.

But the guiding spirit in all this was the Armenian, Güllü Agop, who completed this Armeno-Turkish integration by eventually becoming a Moslem. He had committed his company to the performance of plays in Turkish in 1868. And it was indeed in April of that year that the first Turkish-language performance took place there. This was a play entitled *César Borgia*, translated from the French. Translated plays did not much impress the Turkish audience, however, and Güllü Agop proceeded immediately to produce a tragedy based on the Turkish romance *Layla and Mecnun* by Mustafa Efendi. The following year saw a marked increase in original Turkish plays.

As audience for any kind of theater were scarce in Turkey, Güllü Agop applied to the government for a patent of monopoly for the production of legitimate drama in the Turkish language. The Grand Vizier Ali Paşa granted him a ten-year monopoly as of the date May 16, 1870. But the Armenian producer was also obliged to open new theaters in various parts of Istanbul within a given time. There were some Turkish actors from the beginning but never Turkish actresses, as Moslem women were not permitted to act publicly. This and several other factors delayed the total integration of the Turkish theater in the Turkish milieu for considerable time.

Barred from producing plays in Istanbul by Güllü Agop's monopoly, other would-be producers were encouraged, occasionally by prominent statesmen, to start theaters in the provinces. Several theaters were in fact started; like that in Adana, by the poet and statesman Ziya Paşa, who brought a company from Istanbul; also that in Trabzon, by the governor Ali Bey, who was himself a playwright; and in Bursa, by the governor Ahmet Vefik Paşa, who adapted nearly all of Molière's plays into Turkish and personally ran his own theater, training and directing his own company of actors and inspiring talented Turkish authors to write plays.¹⁷



Güllü Agop.

In Istanbul, Güllü Agop's monopoly was soon challenged, at first by an opera company that claimed his patent did not apply to musical performances on stage, and then by the *Ortaoyunu* actors, of whom we have already spoken. The *Ortaoyunu* used every sort of subterfuge to put on plays indoors as well as outdoors. They charged that Güllü Agop had not built the new theaters he had promised to build and they claimed, besides, that their type of performance improvised without a text or prompter, was not of the kind prescribed by the monopoly. Thus the seed was sown for a new theater that could better nourish itself in the native tradition perhaps, than the borrowed theater translated from the European literatures or directly imitative of them. With their *Tulûat* (improvised) theater, which filled the outline of a vague plot with local events, incidents picked from the newspapers or from street gossip, the *Ortaoyunu* players gave their generation a kind of *commedia dell'arte* that stands on a middle ground between the traditional Turkish theater and the imported Western theater. After the Ottoman Theater Company was abruptly abolished and demolished by order of the Sultan in 1884, theatrical activity generally suffered an eclipse in Turkey.

(b)¹⁸ The second phase of Western theater tradition in Turkey is the restoration period, continuing from 1908, the year of the revolution for the constitutional regime, to 1923, the year of the proclamation of the Republic. It is an important transitional period and a time of political turmoil, not so much for what was accomplished, but for the restoration of theatre and for some attempts to develop in new directions. The early months of 1908 were months of tension and excitement. The new

¹⁷ On this Bursa theatrical venture, there is a very ingenious documentary comedy by Haldun Taner, *Sersem Kocanın Kurnaz Karısı* (Shrewd Wife of Dumb Husband), first performed in Istanbul in 1969, later by the State Theater in 1973. In this three-act comedy by the Turco-Armenian Company, each act is a stylistic variation of a scene from Molière's *George Dandin*—the total result, a parody of different acting styles in Turkey. Taner's thesis that Turkish improvised traditional theater merits attention is driven home by the fact that the third variation, acted by *Tulûat* actors, is obviously preferred.

¹⁸ For this period one may see Metin And, *Meşrutiyet Döneminde Türk Tiyatrosu, 1908-1923*. (Ankara, 1971).



A scene from improvisatory theatre (Tuluat)



A Tuluat Company.

regime was greeted with understandable delight. The theatres shared this enthusiasm and excitement, selecting presentations especially to suit the occasions. A host of new theatres sprang up under the stimulus of the 1908 revolution, and during the fifteen years of its course, these theatres opened, closed and changed titles and administration in rapid succession, some managing to survive for only the briefest periods. Too often dramatic offerings were supplanted by political speeches and demonstrations, audiences being fired with the liberal enthusiasm. During this period, plays previously banned by Abdülhamit's censorship, were revived to stir up the populace against the former regime. The dominant genre of the theatre was *pièces de circonstance*. They were set in the Turkey of the day and their characters were the Young Turks, the leaders of the revolution and the prominent members of the Union and Progress Party.¹⁹ These were shown as patriots while the supporters and followers of Abdülhamit were portrayed as opportunistic villains. So, authors of the time saw the theatre as a vehicle for the debasement of the former regime on the one hand, and for fulsome praise of the constitutional reforms on the other. Hence the deluge of bad plays continued.

Also the theatre was an ideal instrument for the strengthening of the civilian and military morale. Wars followed with dizzying frequency in that period; among them the Turco-Italian War of 1911, the Balkan War of 1912, the First World War and finally the Turkish War of Independence. A long series of Turkish plays were loosely constructed from a series of topical scenes derived from some recent war, glorifying the struggle of the Turkish people against their enemies. Other plays dealt with Ottoman history, lauding Turkish heroes of the past, such as the various military leaders who have defended Turkey. The emphasis in these plays was a manifestation of solidarity, as well as of preparedness for war and self-confidence. Such speedy dramatization of current events gave rise to hundreds of so-called plays and this large amount is enough to testify to the ephemeral nature of these plays.

Yet during this period there were a number of significant developments in respect of the theatre. First of all, the difficulty caused by religious and official attitudes, which did not allow Turkish Moslem women to appear on stage, was never far away during the early years of this period; yet in 1919 for the first time a young girl by the name of Alife appeared in a play, and, though she encountered difficulties at the beginning of her career, she lived to see others follow the trail she had blazed. Her example freed the theatre forever from narrowmindedness.

¹⁹ On this period and on the political party Union and Progress, a contemporary playwright Güngör Dilmən has written an admirable documentary play in verse, *İttihat ve Terakki* (Union and Progress) in which the protagonist is not single character but the whole party, and its vain efforts throughout this period to save the 'sick man of Europe', that is the Ottoman Empire.

Secondly the period saw the establishment of a school of drama and music in Istanbul. The Mayor of Istanbul decided to found a conservatoire and invited André Antoine to come to Turkey to organise the Istanbul Conservatory. Antoine accepted the invitation and in 1914 the first school of theatre in Turkey started to function.²⁰ In 1916, it started giving public performances, gradually becoming more of a theatre than a place for teaching. These preparatory years could be considered as the date of the establishment of the Istanbul Municipal Theatre, which today is still in existence, operating on several stages in Istanbul.²¹

The third contribution of this period is the growing movement of native playwrights and theatre men of distinction. The Republican period has welcomed playwrights and actors who started their career during this period.

(c) The third period extends from the proclamation of the Republic on October 29, 1923, to the present day.²² The establishment of the Republic and the reforms of 1925-28 opened a new era and quickly brought about official approbation and Government support of the cultural and dramatic development of Turkey. The Turkish language was revived, the forgotten general and cultural history of the Turks was rediscovered and reinterpreted. The theatre was an ideal instrument for presenting aspects of cultural nationalism and populism, such as native speech, national history and folklore to the audience. Regarding drama as an essential element in the modernization of Turkey, the State assumes full responsibility for the actor's professional career. The state conservatory established in 1936 in Ankara for training actors, actresses, opera singers and ballet dancers has caused an increasing development in the dramatic arts. When the course at that school is completed, the student is taken on as a member of the State Theater Company, which is the most outstanding feature of the present period. Funds for the State Theatre are provided by the Government, and it functions as an organization of the Ministry of Culture. Additional funds are obtained from the sale of tickets. Ticket prices are very low, about one fifth of New York prices. Thus the State Theatre not only offers a measure of security and opportunities for work in the theatrical profession, but it also provides a continuously functioning theatre for Turkish audiences. Today the State Theatre operates on seven stages, four in Ankara, one in Istanbul, one in Bursa and one in Izmir. There have been controversies over the advisability of fully subsidizing the State Theatre. It is held that providing actors with a guaranteed



The first performance of the Istanbul Municipal Theatre (1916)

²⁰ Antoine's Turkish memoirs have been edited and published with additional notes by the present writer. See André Antoine, *Chez Les Turcs* (Ankara, 1965).

²¹ For a scholarly work on the 50 years of the history of the Istanbul Municipal Theatre see Özdemir Nutku, *Darülbeyaz'ın Elli Yılı* (Ankara, 1969).

²² For a detailed study of this period, see Metin And, *Elli Yılın Türk Tiyatrosu* (Istanbul, 1973).

the State Theatre. It is held that providing actors with a guaranteed salary and pension turns them into civil servants, cripples young actors, killing their ambition and dulling their talent. In the last twenty years, the State Theatre has produced a great number of good plays, from Sophocles to Albee, and has introduced several new Turkish dramatists. This is a most respectable record, yet recently the State Theatre has not always proved a yardstick of quality in its capacity as a National Theatre. The State Theatre and several private theatres have been sending companies on one or two month tours throughout the country.

The Halkevleri (The People's Hearths) were established in 1931, and were charged with cultural emancipation of the masses through a concerted programme of literary, artistic and, to a large extent, dramatic projects. Yet although they met with success, this movement was stopped on political grounds. Since this initial period of experimentation, the necessity has slowly been revealed for regionalisation, and the future trend will be towards the establishment in various centres of regional theatre companies.

Theatrical activity in Turkey is mostly confined to the two largest cities, Ankara and Istanbul. The latter is the largest city in Turkey, and in it there are between twenty and twenty five theatres as well as five which are owned by the local municipality. Those theatres in Istanbul which are privately owned and managed, are professional in the true sense of the word. The government gives no subsidies to these companies, not even in the form of tax relief. Apart from the four theatres of the State Theatre Company, Ankara has a few private companies the number of which varies from season to season. Recently the supply has exceeded the demand due to the advent of television, so the houses are almost invariably half empty. Actors are underpaid and provided with practically no trade union protection. So recently, while the theatrical life of Turkey has been very active, it has only been superficially so.

However, on the brighter side, the last twenty years have seen a quickening tempo in the production of works by dramatists, which has made an important contribution to the contemporary renaissance of the Turkish theatre. They turn the spotlight on Turkey's social problems, with dramas which have universal themes. These playwrights have been more successful than the generation of writers belonging to the first Republican period. The previous period's writers used rather Strindbergian psychological realism where characters worked out their story in an almost society-less vacuum. Often they echoed Ibsen to a shallow degree and betrayed little sense of a surrounding society. Some productive and innovative playwrights of the current period produce plays on the alienation theme, some writers are inspired by mythology, folk legends, local history and by the history of previous civilizations, which plots they usually write in verse. Some writers in the Brechtian manner, have

written plays suggesting that the protagonists are not isolated individuals but symptoms of the entire society's failings and ills. In the tone of avant-garde, some writers shows the absurdity and the senselessness of the society of which their heroes are a product. The types of play most favored by recent writers include the tragedy of the common man, the mediocre milieu of the middle class, embittered lives of middle and working class families, and thesis plays with rural settings, describing life's seamy and unhappy side, but implying that something can be done about it. The successful plays felicitously combine the art of the poet and the playwright, and derive from and are connected with native speech, customs, traditions and historic peculiarities, which develop from the native genius of a people, rather than from foreign models and influences. Recently some writers and artists have approached western culture, no longer as an ideal model, but as a contrasting tradition. Some, including the present writer, believe that is vital to blend Turkish and Western elements harmoniously and that there is a need to establish a national theatrical identity. In practice these ethnocentric ideas have been approached by some playwrights in different ways, and the subject matter of this present book, Karagöz, contributes an important source of inspiration to this development as shall be examined in the concluding chapter.

The Origins and the Development of Turkish Shadow Theatre

The shadow theatre spread from the Far East, and having first been recorded in Java, China and India, came to Turkey on its travels westward. Some scholars like Berhold Laufer¹ or Hermann Reich² however have claimed that puppet or shadow theatre originated in the Mediterranean area and spread later to the East, but this theory has been rejected on many grounds, more particularly on the ground that there is no record of shadow theatre in ancient Greece or Byzantium. In these days it is an accepted fact that it came westward from Asia. However there remains still a controversy concerning by which route it came to Turkey.

According to the theory based on Dr. Pischel's thesis, it is ascertained that not only can the origin of the Indian drama be found in the puppet play of that country, but the home of the puppet-show is India, from whence it is said to have travelled to Europe.³ That eminent scholar of the history of shadow

¹ See Laufer's introduction to Grube-Krebs-Laufer, *Chinesische Schatten-spiele* (München, 1915), p. viii.

² H. Reich, *Der Mimus. Ein literar-entwicklungsgeschichtlicher Versuch*, 1/1 (Berlin, 1903), p. 692.

³ Richard Pischel, *Die Heimat des Puppenspiele*, (Halle, 1900).

theatre, Dr. Georg Jacob, has put forward a thesis based on Dr. Pischel's theory on puppet-theatre that it is most probable that gypsies emerging from northwest India about a thousand years ago, traced a path across Asia and Europe. It is quite likely they brought the Indian shadow theatre with them, and stopping in Asia Minor, might well have popularized that art in Turkey.⁴ Not only has the untenability of Dr. Pischel thesis been proved, but despite his work the origins of Indian shadow theatre must still remain an obscure subject. The shadow-play in India is an art confined to South Asia, whereas the gypsies mentioned above emigrated from northern India. However, supporting this gypsy theory, there is a wealth of reference to gypsy elements predominating and that Karagöz himself is a gypsy, sometimes appearing as a blacksmith. In addition to this, a figure of Karagöz in this book shows him as a gypsy, selling grills and tongs, which is one of the main occupations of gypsies in Turkey. [fig. 16] In brief, while it must be said that there is not enough substantial proof of the above contention in Jacob's thesis, at least it must not be rejected as a total impossibility.

The shadow and puppet theatre of Turkey has long been studied by scholars but only recently have we discovered that there was not one but several kinds of shadow theatre and more than four distinct types of puppets. In other words there is virtually no kind of puppet show that Turkey has not tried.⁵ We shall demonstrate that before they came to know shadow theatre, in the 16th century, the Turks enjoyed a long-standing established puppet tradition. Many of the old texts prove somewhat ambiguous for there was some confusion over the word 'puppet' and the use of the Arabic word *hayal* in Turkish. This word literally means 'fancy', 'imagination', 'mirror'. But theatrically speaking, it means nothing more than *taklit* or mimicry. A Spanish missionary Pedro de Alcalá, in his Arabic dictionary, *Vocabulista Arabigo* [Granada, 1505], shows that *lu'b-i hayal* or *el-hayal-i lu'b* means *momos contrahezedor* in Spanish which is play or acting based on imitation.⁶ As to the use of the word *hayal* in Turkish, it was employed both for the shadow and the puppet play. Some however took it to mean only shadow theatre. The string puppet or marionette of Turkestan, *Çadır Hayal* (literally meaning 'Tent Play'), by some

⁴ Georg Jacob, *Geschichte des Schattentheaters im Morgen und Abendland*, (Hannover, 1925), pp. 109-10.

⁵ Yet in the 1974 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (ix, p. 979), it is erroneously stated as follows: "In comparison with *orta oyunu*, the marionette theatre, although popular in Turkestan (under the name of *çadır hayal*), and parts of Muslim Central Asia, never really caught on in the Ottoman Empire". These lines were written by the Professor Jacob M. Landau, an authority on Arab theater. In addition, while in his bibliography he lists my book, *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey* as the first of his sources he still seems not to be aware of the long established puppet tradition in Turkey.

⁶ Cited in R. Dozy, *Supplement aux Dictionnaires Arabes*, (Paris/Leiden, 1877), I, p. 418.

mistake was taken to be shadow theatre performed in a tent. It is from this false assumption that they concluded that shadow theatre came to Turkey from Central Asia. Similarly the Persian string puppet or marionnette *Hayme-i Şebbazî* (literally meaning 'Tent of Nocturnal Play') was taken erroneously to be shadow theatre since it is played at night.⁷ The fifteenth century moralist, Husain Vaiz Kashifi, a native of Bahihag, in his book *Fütüvvet-name*⁸ using the puppet play symbolically to point out moral truths and draw lessons, gives particulars at length of the puppet shows of this time, and there he clearly mentions that hand or glove puppets are day entertainments, where as string puppets or marionnettes are for the night.



A Mameluke figure.

However old Turkish texts do not make the same mistake; they add the word *zill*. In other words *hayal* is a word like 'suret' for both shadow and puppet. To specify that it is shadow theatre, one would say *zill-i hayal* or *hayal-i zill*, that is 'phantoms of shadow' or 'shadow phantoms'. In that connection there is a manuscript of the 16th century in the Topkapı Palace [D. 10022] which contains a list naming individual players and the names of the player companies; it has many headings which could have a connection either with shadow theatre or puppet theatre. Since these headings, are mentioned in the manuscript in close sequence, we have every reason to believe that they are to be taken in relation to one another. One is the *suretbazan*; another is *hayal-i has*; the third one is *cemaati-piyade çadırları*, and the fourth *hayal-i zilciyan*. Here, next to *hayal-i has*, we have *suretbazan* which could be a species of puppet. *Hayal-i has* could be either a different kind of puppet or puppet players who perform only for the aristocracy of the palace. The same confusion reigns about of *cemaat-i piyade çadırları*, literally 'the company of pedestrian tents'. By the very word tent and the placing of this very group of players next to other shadow and puppet types, we can easily see how it came to be associated with the puppets of Turkestan's *Çadır Hayal*. In the same company, where the names of players are enumerated, we find also the word *ayak kuklası* that is 'foot puppet'. A foreign eye witness' account might be helpful in making clear the meaning of 'foot puppet': "Another man brought a thing onto the square that was about an ell in height and width and was surrounded with red cloth. He set himself in front of it and pulled and pushed with his feet at it, so that on top all kinds of strange figures appeared. There were among other things little men, birds and animals, only the top half of their bodies showing; and they jumped and sprang back and forth."⁹

⁷ A photo of this is to be found in my *Geleneksel...* p. 89.

⁸ British Museum MS, Add. 22, 705.

⁹ See Nicholas von Haunolth, *Particular Verzeichnuzs mit was Ceremonien...* Published in Johannes Lewenklaw, *Neuwe Cronica Türkischer Nation*, (Frankfurt am Mayn, 1590). p. 497.



A Mameluke figure.

Also in the sixteenth century the well known historian Mustafa Ali of Gelibolu, refers to shadow theatre as *zill-i hayal* and defines the shadow plays as 'play with words', rather than a dumb show, as the other show would appear to be.¹⁰ Maybe the great Turkish traveller of 17th century, Evliya Çelebi, has the answer. While enumerating various players of the seventeenth century, he mentioned two kinds of shadow theatre and two kinds of puppet theatre. We have no means of distinguishing the difference between the two kinds of shadow theatre. One he called *hayal-i zilciyan*, the other *hayal-i zill-i tasviriciyan*.¹¹ Von Hammer's translation of Evliya into English will be more helpful as his translation is more than a hundred years closer to the period of Evliya than we are today. His translation might be said to contain the truth. In the first place his translation goes,

"The pehlivan night players (*Şebbazan*) who play at night represent *les ombres chinoises*. In the second, the night players with painted figures (*hayal tasviriciyan*) perform with magic lantern".¹²

If this translation is correct, then the first one is performed behind a curtain as is Karagöz, while the second one is not behind a curtain but projected on to a curtain or flat surface like the cinema. 'Kukla' is the Turkish word for puppet, and Evliya mentions it in reference two kinds of puppets. One is *kukla*, the other *başkukla* (head puppet). Von Hammer misses on the translation of the second. Could the second one be a different kind of puppet or does it mean the master, chief performer or chief puppeteer? We have no definite answer.

Very little is known about Turkish puppets and the difference between puppet and shadow plays. There were four distinct kinds of puppets in Turkey. The first is the *iskemle kuklası* (jigging puppet) which was presented by gypsies/street showmen. The show consisted of from one to four music-box figures with a string passing horizontally through their breasts, strung from an upright post fixed on a small booth or chair. When performers pulled the string, the puppets moved to the music. *El kuklası* (hand or glove puppet) and *ipli kukla* (marionette, worked by strings) are the two other kinds. It has been said they were introduced to Turkey at the end of 19th century by an English puppet master, Thomas Holden. Since this kind of puppet was so much identified with Holden, more recent bills of puppet performances still carry his name.

However as in Central Asia both glove or hand puppets and marionettes are known respectively under the name of *Kol*

¹⁰ Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, *Mevâ'idü'n Nefâ'is Fi Kava'idü'l-Mecâlis*, (Istanbul 1956), pp. 94-95.

¹¹ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyyahatname*, (Istanbul, 1898), I, p. 625.

¹² Evliya Efendi, *Narrative of travels in Europe, Asia and Africa in the Seventeenth Century*, tr. Ritter Joseph von Hammer (London, 1834), I/2, p. 229.

Korçak (glove puppet) and *Çadır Hayal* (marionnette), Turkey could have easily borrowed them long before Thomas Holden. The fourth kind are the giant puppets. They were huge figures, carried usually in street processions, moved by men concealed inside the puppets, some being made to dance and other belonging to the dramatic aspect of the subject. We find numerous illustrations of these giant puppets in collections of old miniatures in old books of festivities. Some have two heads and some carry smaller puppets in their hands or on their heads, which move separately.¹³ In a festivity book of the 18th century, *Surname*, by Vehbi we find an illustration of almost life size puppets representing half a dozen dancing boys in a carriage. The text says they were worked from underneath by concealed manipulators who supported them on rods.¹⁴

Since shadow theatre did not come from Central Asia (as Central Asia and Persia do not have shadow theatre), we must examine closer the evidence asserting that shadow theatre was borrowed from Egypt in sixteenth century. Sultan Selim I, who incorporated Egypt into the Turkish realm in 1517, commanded the last Sultan of the Mamelukes to be hanged. This order was carried out and Sultan Tumanbay II was duly hanged on 15th April 1517, at the Bab-ı Zuvela. In the palace on Roda Island in the River Nile Sultan Selim watched a performance of a shadow play, representing the hanging of the last Sultan of the Mamelukes and the breaking of the rope twice during the execution. He took so much delight in the performance that he rewarded the performer with eighty gold pieces and an embroidered kaftan and told the performer, "When we go to Istanbul, you will come with us so that my son too can see the shadow play." His son, later known as Soliman the Magnificent, was twenty-one at the time. This is recorded in *Tarih-i Mısır* ('The Egyptian Chronicle') of Muhammed ibn Ahmet Ibn Iyas, an eye witness of the events.¹⁵ In fact, it appears that the Sultan, on his return took with him a troupe of players to Turkey. And three years after ascending the throne, the Sultan sent back six hundred Egyptians to their country.¹⁶ It is probable amongst these that the players were to be found. There is more evidence to the effect that Egyptian shadow players had been watched in Turkey in the 17th century. When, on 20th June 1612, Ahmet I's sister, Gevherhan, married Öküz Mehmet Paşa, some Egyptian shadow players were invited for the occasion.

¹³ See miniature no. 4 in my article "Various Species of Shadow Theatre and Puppet Theatre in Turkey", *Atti Del Secondo Congresso Internazionale di Arte Turca*, (Napoli, 1965).

¹⁴ *ibid*, miniature no. 5.

¹⁵ The Chronicle of Ibn Iyas was published in three volumes by the Government Press (Bulak A. H. 1311-12/1893-95). Its original title is *Bada'i al-zuhur fi waga' al-duhur*. The above mentioned event is in volume III, p. 125 and 134. Ibn Iyas mentions shadow theatre on three more occasions in his Chronicle: II, p. 33 and 347; III, p. 183.

¹⁶ Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte der osmanischen Reiches* (Budapest, 1827-35), III, p. 7.



Five mediaeval Mameluke puppets.



Note the faces which are shown in a mixture of both profile and front view. (Compare these with the Turkish figures.)



Among them was the famous Egyptian shadow player, Davud el-attar (Menavi), whom Sultan Ahmet I, had seen perform in Edirne. This is recorded in the Manévi's memoirs.¹⁷

In the *Surname-i Hümayun*, a manuscript with 437 miniatures relating to the festival of the circumcision ceremony of the Sultan Murat III's son in 1582, the term *hayalbazan* is used in several places throughout the text. Without giving any further detail as to the nature of what is meant by *hayalbazan*, a term which is usually applied to different kinds of puppet shows, an instance occurs in a lengthy chapter describing a novelty shadow play show presented by two Arabs. The author in his description mentions explicitly that this show, a shadow theatre entertainment, is quite a novelty. Without reading the whole 'Book of Festival', one can assume that it was taken for granted by the author that everybody in Turkey would know about puppet shows, since no explanation is provided therein. The author, however, has gone to a lot of trouble to expound on shadow theatre. This I think proves our point.

The text describes that behind a lit screen in a portable tent, the puppeteer starts the proceeding with an invocation to God and the Sultan. After this, a succession of scenes depicts how a man eats and bobs his head, how a ship sails and how a dragon swallows up people. Then a strong wind capsizes a galley. It is noticed throughout that fruit trees, regardless of the seasons, are heavy with fruit and various flowers bloom on a lawn. The show goes on to present spectacles where people at feasts are seen to eat and drink. At another point in the action, ferocious animals fight with each other. Meanwhile a singer sings beautiful melodies and young lovers pay court to beautiful girls. We see how a cat eats a mouse and how a stork eats a snake.¹⁸

A contemporary German account of the same festival, contains abundant descriptions of various kinds of puppetry performances, and in one instance it describes the shadow theatre in the following manner: "... a man pushed a scaffolding or stage onto the square, which was on six wheels and was boarded up with shutters. It had up front only a white linen screen, but inside there were several lights. There, a man depicted, by means of the shadow that several figures threw on account of the lights on the linen screen, how a cat eats a mouse and how a stork eats a snake. He also depicted how two persons pointed and talked to each other, like the deaf people do it. Another thing he showed was how one person hunted and stalked etc."¹⁹

These visual sequences are characteristics of early Arabian shadow play. Umar ibn al-Farid, in his book *Ta'yyat al-kubra*, dated early in the twelfth century, describes contemporary

¹⁷ See Paul Kahle, "Islamische Schattenspielfiguren aus Egypten", *Der Islam*, I-II, (1910-11), pp. 264-299 and pp. 143-195.

¹⁸ *Surname-i Hümayun* MS Topkapı Palace Museum (carrying 437 miniatures) H. 1344, folios 45a-45b.

¹⁹ Haunolth, p. 489.

shadow play in detail. In his poem, the following scenes are described: "birds warbling on the boughs", "on land the camels crossing the wilderness", "at sea the ships run swiftly through the deep", "two armies-one on land, on sea another-multitudes of men, clad, for their bravery, in iron mail and fenced about with points of sword and spear", "the land-troops march on horse-back or on foot", "bold cavaliers and stubborn infantry", "apparitions strange of naked viewless spirits (i.e., the Jinns) thou mayst espy, that wear no friendly shape of human kind, for genies love not men", "in the stream the fisher casts his net and draws forth fish", "craftily the fowler sets a snare that hungry birds may fall in it for corn", "ravening monsters wreck the ships at sea", "lions in the jungle send their prey", "in the air some birds", "in the wilds some animals hunt others".²⁰

This tradition of visual sequences, especially those involving animals, survived as long as the 19th century in Turkish shadow theatre as separate skits. For instance, in the 17th century, an Italian traveller, Cornelio Magni, in his book on Turkey, first described puppet theatre and then shadow theatre, and when he was giving identifying particulars, he said "with a lighting source behind the screen they show men, trees, horses, camels and other animals, with many scenes showing these same in combat".²¹ And in the 19th century, an English traveller, Richard Davey, while describing at length a Karagöz show he witnessed in Istanbul, mentioned that before the main play started, a small skit was performed:

"... For a minute or two, the transparency remained empty. Presently a funny little figure on a camel's back scurried across, speedily followed by a cat running after a mouse. The cat played with the mouse an unconscionable time, and finally swallowed it whole. At this the orchestra emitted the most appalling noises, a sort of quivering shriek, intermingled with a rumbling rattle-possibly intended to illustrate the agonies of the luckless mouse in the torture-chamber of the cat's stomach; then, with a deafening tattoo on the quaint-shaped drum, it gradually settled into silence. Puss's repast was evidently over. The incident of the cat and the mouse had so delighted the audience that a little wave of admiring whispers rippled among them partly in European and the other in Turkish fashion".²²



Three Mameluke figures.



Two Camels.

²⁰ For English translation, see R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, (Cambridge, 1921), pp. 189 ff. For German translation, see J. Horowitz, "Ibn al-Fārid über das Schattenspiel", *Der Islam*, 8 (1917) pp. 189-90, 298-9.

²¹ Cornelio Magni, *Il piu curioso e vago della Turchia*, (Parma, 1704), pp. 15-16.

²² Richard Davey, *The Sultan and his Subjects* (London, 1897), I, pp. 346-47. This chapter dealing with Karagöz has been reproduced in a periodical. See, R. Davey, "Karagheuz and the Stage in Turkey", *The Theatre*, I (1896), pp. 257-262.



A bird of prey holding a serpent (*Göstermelik*)



Four Mameluke figures depicting birds and animals

And then he goes on to describe the main play. This reminds us of a cartoon film by Walt Disney, of the sort shown before the feature film. There is evidence supporting his descriptions, as collections containing fairly old specimens of Turkish shadow theatre are extant such as those in the Museum für Volkerkunde in Hamburg and in Topkapı Palace in Istanbul-which display figures of cats, mice, storks and serpents among other kinds of animal. [fig. 82; 85]

Animal mimicry has been an important source of subject matter for other genres of entertainer namely for jesters and story tellers. Evliya mentions a famous mimic of his time

"who was famous, not for imitating men, but for mimicking all kinds of animals, the quarrels of dog and cat, of cat and mice, of cock-fights, or horses and camels, together with the song of all possible types of bird".²³

Furthermore, there is additional evidence of this to be found in three extant Mediaeval Arabic shadow texts. Muhammad Ibn Danyal (d. 1311), an Egyptian physician, composed around 1260-77, three shadow plays in prose dialogue, versified only occasionally and interspersed with songs and rhymed prose.²⁴ These start with a prologue where the Master of Ceremonies expresses his thanks to the audience and praises God and Muhammed. He then recites a prayer for the well-being of the Sultan, in the manner of Turkish shadow theatre. The first play is *Taif al-Hayal*, ('The Spirit of Imagination'). In this, the hero wants to get married and the matchmaker finds a girl. After the marriage ceremony, the bridegroom lifts the veil covering the bride's face to discover with horror that she is of a most ugly appearance. This is very reminiscent of the well-known Karagöz play, *Sahte Gelin* ('The False Bride'). It also suggests Ibrahim Şinasi's play, *The Poet's Marriage*, which marks the beginning of the Turkish drama, proper and, was commissioned by the Court for the opening of newly built palace theatre in 1859. Its subject is an attempt to ridicule the custom of arranged marriages.

The second play is *Acib and Garib* ('The Fantastic and the Bizarre'), where a wide variety of character types appear and also a long procession of animal-tamers in the manner of Karagöz shows. The two main characters, Acib and Garib, are contrasted like Hacivad and Karagöz in the Turkish shadow play. The third play, *Al-Mutayyam* ('The Love stricken') presents a dwarf who asks an endless string of strange and humorous questions, reminiscent of the Turkish dwarf, Beberuhi, one of the most important characters in the Turkish shadow play. The third play, like the second, parades various characters, while the central character, al-Mutayyam, struggles to win the girl he loves. In the process he participates in cock-fights, ram-fights

²³ Evliya, I, p. 658.

²⁴ Georg Jacob, pp. 56-101.

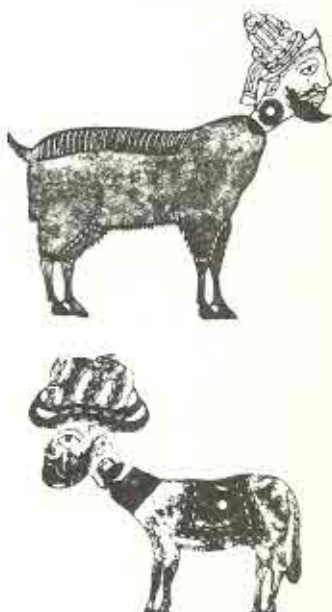
and bull-fights with his rival. This is slightly reminiscent of a Turkish shadow play called *Ödüllü or Karagöz the Wrestler* ('The Prize-Wrestling Match'). Thus Ibn Danyal's plays afford additional ground for accepting the opinion that, initially the Turkish shadow play was borrowed from the Egyptian prototype. This is not only because of shared similarities in structure, presentation and some of the motifs between the Egyptian and the Turkish one, but because of further evidence provided in Ibn Danyal's plays, three manuscripts of which have survived. One of these can be found in the Istanbul manuscript library, Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa-Millet Kütüphanesi (No. 648). It was written in the year 1424-5. That means Turkish people had heard of Ibn Danyal's plays at least as early as that date. Furthermore, Ibn Iyas, the previously mentioned author of 'Egyptian Chronicle' who has handed down valuable information on how the Egyptian shadow theatre travelled to Turkey in the early 16th century, is most probably responsible for copying considerable parts from Ibn Danyal's first shadow play.²⁵ Ibn Danyal's three plays are replete with animal tamers and animal fights which, as we have already stressed, are an important feature of Egyptian shadow theatre; one which it has contributed to the Turkish shadow theatre.

To summarise, no records have been found as to the existence of the shadow play in Turkey prior to the 16th century. The only evidence to support the contrary view (that Turkey had a shadow theatre before the 16th century) is given by Evliya, when he describes a famous shadow puppeteer of his time, Hasan-zade. He mentions that the grand father of this man, Kör Hasan, was a mimic at the time of Bayazid I, the Thunderbolt (1360-1403), that is during the 14th century. However, not only does Evliya not specify clearly that Kör Hasan was a shadow puppeteer, but also, in the same 16th century document to which we have referred above, Kör Hasan's name is mentioned as living the 16th century when he worked as a shadow puppeteer.

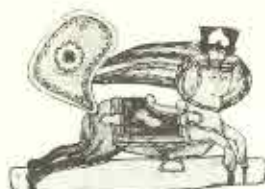
One question, however, remains and that is the origin of Egyptian shadow play. There seems little doubt that the shadow play was borrowed from Java by the Arabs. Arab trading and raiding expeditions kept them in continuous contact with Java. The Arabs had small colonies in the coastal cities of Southeast Asia. They had become acquainted with Java even before the island was visited in 1345 by the famous traveller, Ibn Batuta of Tangier. Arab traders adopted the Islamic religion between the seventh and tenth centuries. Arabic, Persian and Egyptian stories were introduced into the region, and some were adopted by the puppeteers of the Javanese shadow play, in particular various episodes of *Hamzaname*. Also, a point which shall be developed below, it is assumed that the influence of Sunni Muhammedanism,



Two anthropomorphized animal figures (Compare these two Mameluke figures with the two Turkish figures below)



²⁵ See J. M. Landau, "Shadow Plays in the Near East", *Edoeth*, III/1-2/1948/, p. 171 nr. 28.



Göstermelik: A Burak i.e. the beast which served as a mount for the Prophet on which he is said to have made his ascension into Heaven. (Similar to fig. 84)



Göstermelik: 'Vak-vak' or talking tree.

which discouraged the reproduction in art of human form, was responsible for the strange distortion of the Javanese figures.

Now the question as to whether there was any indirect influence via Egypt of the Javanese on the Turkish shadow play, is difficult to answer. I shall try to give below evidence for and against the possibility of such indirect influence. The balance of probability is even, as we do not possess figures of early Turkish shadow puppets.

(i.) The Javanese shadow play is exhibited by a *Dalang*, who, as the manager of the show and the speaker of the dialogue, in which he modulates his voice according to the various characters in the play, repeats the characters' parts. The Turkish *hayalci* or *hayali*, the operator of the Karagöz show, corresponds exactly to the *Dalang*, since he is the master who directs and animates the whole proceeding, regulating the entire show on his own. Both the *Dalang* and the *Hayalci* start the show with a kind of invocation, where there are some references to animism and sufism.

(ii.) In the Javanese shadow play the *dalang*, before starting the play and during the overture, places, on the centre of the screen the set figure, *kayon* or *gunungan*. It is usually a composite figure, a Tree of Life. This is similar to Turkish *göstermelik* the present book presenting several illustrations of this feature some of which are composite figures. The composite figure can represent a camel made up of various animals or a djinn made almost entirely of human faces. In one particular case two of these faces appear on the knee-caps, two on the calves and one is suspended from the hands. All these are in profile. The head features the figure of a serpent. [107: 71: 72] This is a long standing Ottoman folk-art technique, of building up pictures of animals, or of human and animal faces. It also has a parallel in the Turkish tradition of using letters of the alphabet to build up pictures of human faces, animals or of objects. There is a wide spread practice of it in Islamic and Indian iconography.²⁶ In the same manner, there is another *göstermelik*, which is *vak-vak ağacı*, a kind of Tree of Life, of which the fruits are human heads or human bodies. It is believed the origin of it is to be found in either Madagascar or Sumatra. It is referred to in the epic *Şehname* and other such books.²⁷

(iii.) The Turkish puppets are worked by horizontal rods, whereas the Javanese ones are moved and supported by vertical rods. However there are two devices which provide alternatives to the usual horizontal rods employed in Turkish shadow theatre. One is *hayal ağacı*, 'puppet tree'. The operator can manipulate

²⁶ See Ph. W. Schulz, *Die-persisch-islamische Miniaturmalerei* (Leipzig, 1914), plate 187; E. Kuehnel, *Miniaturmalerei im islamischen Orient* (Berlin, 1922), p. 106.

²⁷ On 'talking tree' one may read with profit N. Martinovich, "Talking Tree", *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* (1939, pp. 611-612. See the miniature facing page 116 in Sir Thomas W. Arnold, *Painting in Islam*, (New York, 1965).

only two figures at a time, so when there is a demand for more than two figures on stage, he uses this device. The 'puppet tree' is a Y shaped rod made by sticking these rods into the holes on the ledge at the bottom of screen. So that they stand vertically. The horizontal rods of the figures are placed in the cleft of these rods, so that by pressing the ends of the horizontal rods against the screen with his chest or stomach these figures stand still and do not move. Through this device a crowd scene can be easily accomplished. The second device is called by the shadow puppeteer *firdöndü*, a 'swivel'; which is designed to overcome a disadvantage presented by the horizontal rods; that is that the puppets can not be turned round to face the other way. This device is similar to that used in the Chinese shadow play. It is simply a rod wire fixed in a wooden handle, the curved end of which is inserted in a small leather socket on the outer edge and at the back, in a sort of hinge attached to the figure. The puppeteer can give it a quick flip in order to make the figure face in the opposite direction. There are a few Turkish shadow figures fitted with this device in the Hamburg and Topkapı Palace collections, showing that the device has been known by Turks for a quite sometime. [fig 55]



A hobby horse figure with a swivel device (*firdöndü*). Compare this with fig. 55.

(iv.) The Javanese puppets are worked in delicate details. They are similar in this and other aspects to the Turkish figures. However the Turkish figures are made of transparent leather whereas the Javanese ones are opaque. A more important difference is that the Javanese shadow figures are strangely distorted and grotesque. The nose in particular is seen to be unnaturally prominent, giving a bird like profile. In the opinion of some scholars, it was distorted purposely due to Islamic influence, in order to make the widely popular entertainment acceptable within the dictates of the Sunni Muslim religion in respect of the representation of the human form. But to some, they existed almost in their present form before the introduction of Islam. On the other hand the faces of the Turkish puppets are human, natural and real. It is true that the Islam religion does not allow the reproduction of the human form in any way. As a result, many writers, thinkers and theologians have tried to find an excuse for the existence of the shadow theatre, and for its being very popular in Islamic countries. They claim that shadow puppets were proven to be inanimate. The nature of the design helped to serve as an excuse, for the puppet, attached by a string or rod through a hole which transmitted the light, could hardly be mistaken for human flesh. Umar ibn al-Farid, the Arab author previously mentioned, explains in his *Taiyyat al kubra*, that if these holes let the light through, the figures could not have been made in human flesh, and therefore cannot be considered a representative imitation of living beings rivalling God's exclusive power to create.²⁸ Turkey's approach to the representation of



A composite figure of a camel. (Compare this with fig. 71)

²⁸ See Richard Ettinghausen, "Early Shadow Figures", *Bulletin of the American Institute for Persian Art and Archeology*, 6 (1934), pp. 10-15

human figures has been more liberal. In Ottoman practice, *Fetvas*, or sentences delivered on a matter of Canon Law by Müftis, indicated the official attitude towards theatrical spectacles. The law prohibited only certain forms of imitations, such as those which might seek to belittle respected institutions like education, the law or religion. For instance, the antics of some entertainers led the audience to neglect their religious duties. The very fact that there was a *fetva* designed to limit the nature of the performance is ample proof in itself that representation and imitation of living figures was allowed however. A leading theologian of the 16th century, Ebussuut Efendi, delivered several *fetvas* on the lawfulness of shadow theatre. In addition to this, Turkey had a long standing tradition of the painting of human figures, since for centuries in other fields of Turkish art, human figures had been created in the round.²⁹ Not only was the shadow play enjoyed in Turkey over the centuries without any murmur of dissent, but also various kinds of puppets and marionnettes as well.

(v.) As we have already seen, early Turkish shadow theatre began with dances and fighting among animals, which are perhaps reminiscent of the Javanese 'fantastic vine' with birds and monkeys on it. [fig. 73]

(iv.) Each new character in Turkish shadow theatre is introduced by a signature tune. This perhaps is akin to the Javanese practice of identifying a new figure on his entrance by the orchestra playing a special tune.

Karagöz is the title role in the shadow theatre, so the theatre itself is also called Karagöz. Many legendary accounts have been advanced regarding the origin of the Karagöz. The most popular of these relates how, during the reign of the Sultan Orhan (1326-1359), a Mosque was being built in Bursa, Hacıvat was a mason and Karagöz a blacksmith. Their conversation was so humorous that all work on the mosque ceased. The sultan was very angry and hanged them both. However, he was later filled with remorse. In order to console him, one of his retainers named Şeyh Küşteri built a screen and manipulated puppets representing the two dead men.³⁰ This legend however has several versions. One version says that Küşteri did not manipulate the puppets but used yellow slippers instead. A second says that Hacıvat

²⁹ Most immediate information on this particular topic can easily be found in my *Turkish Miniature Painting. The Ottoman Period* (Ankara, 1974), pp. 8-12.

³⁰ This legend showing an animistic touch has a parallel in a legend in China on the origin of shadow theatre where Wu, an Emperor of the Han dynasty, in 121 B.C. was grieved at the death of his favourite wife, Wang, and ordered the Court Magician Schau Wöng to summon back her spirit. The Magician duly evoked a image which resembled her in a darkened room by casting her shadow on a screen, which satisfied the Emperor. See Laufer, p. viii. Souls of the departed summoned back to the world by means of shadow theatre, there by enabling the living to communicate with the dead and a distressed person to be consoled and healed, has parallels in Java also.

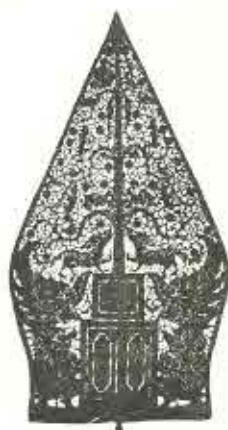
and Karagöz were good friends of the sultan but for some other unknown reason they angered him and were hanged. Yet another version relates that this took place during the reign of Sultan Bayazid, not that of Orhan. A final one tells how Hacivat was a grocer and Karagöz a blacksmith, whose shops faced each other in Bursa. One day, their humorous conversation caused work on the mosque to stop. The grand vizier, in a rage, had their heads cut off. Hacivat and Karagöz then carried their heads under their arms and went to complain to the Sultan. Of all these legends, the first one is the most popular and has been retold in many shadow plays. However Evliya has quite a different version. According to him

Karagöz is the merry fellow, and Hacivat the prudent philosopher. Hacivat [Hacı Ayvad] is the corrupted name of Hacı İvaz, who, at the time of the Seljukides, was a messenger going between Bursa and Mecca. He was properly called Yorkça Çelebi, whose ancestors were known by the name of Efeli oğulları, famous for their great dogs, pointers. Even today the proverb goes: "Why are you yelling like Efelioğlu's pointers?". This Yorkça Halil Hacı Ayvad during his travel along the road between Bursa and Mecca was killed by the Arab bandits. He was buried at Bedir Hanı. His dog remained with the murderers, and accompanied them to Damascus, where, whining, he kissed the feet of all men, but attacked the Arabs, barking and biting. The people were struck by this extraordinary event and laid hold on the Arabs. Searching them, they found Efelioğlu's effects amongst their baggage: his sling, hatchet, blood-stained clothes and his letter bag. Enraged, the people hanged the murderers in a row in the square at Sinaniye. Afterwards, the dog placed himself at the foot of the gallows and breathed his life out. This is the origin of Hacı Ayvad.

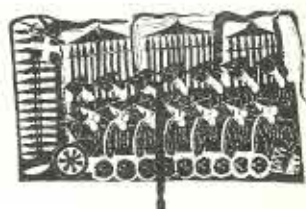
Karagöz, the merry fellow, was a messenger of Constantine, the last Greek Emperor. He was a gypsy, who dwelt in the neighbourhood of Edirne, at Kırkkilise, where he was known as a smooth-tongued cheat. His whole name was Sofyozlu Karagöz Bali Çelebi. He was sent once a year to Alâeddin, the Sultan of the Seljuks, residing at Konya, where he entered into a funny, disputatious word-contest with Hacı Ayvad, the court-messenger of Alâeddin. These disputes were imitated and acted out by the mimics, providings of the business involved in all the representations of the shadow theatre, *hayal-i zill*.³¹

No reliance can, of course, be placed on the above since these stories evolved at least four centuries after the events are supposed to have happened.

Some claim that the name of the principal character, Karagöz, under which the Turkish shadow play is known, is derived from that of the Egyptian vizier, Baha-ed-din Karakush, an intimate



Two Javanese set figures
(kayon or gunung)



A Javanese set piece
(Rampohan) depicting
an army.

³¹ Evliya, I, pp. 654-655.

Various clowns, buffoons,
jesters in the 16th century.
(Topkapı Palace MS H,
1344)



of the famous Salah al-Din, who gave Karakush an important post in Egypt. Some bitter attacks were launched against him in 1209-10 by one Ibn Mannati, who lampooned him viciously in a work entitled "The Book of Emptyhead, Concerning the Resolves of Karakush". It was sheer irony to transform a great warrior into a man looking and acting like a perfect fool. This caught such a hold on the popular mind that the name of the victim provided the outline for various folk-tales over the ensuing centuries, retaining the character of the political incident from which the work had initially sprung. Ironically Karakush, who embodies many humorous qualities like stupidity, foolishness and a lack of courtesy also embodies bravery.³²

However it is pure fantasy to try to pin down the origins of Karagöz and, up to present time, we have no conclusive proof as to where he originated. First of all, Ibn Danyal, who lived about a hundred years after Karakush, neglects to mention him. Also there is the fact that 'Karakush' means 'Black Bird', whereas 'Karagöz' means 'Black Eye'. Finally the Turkish shadow theatre was named after Karagöz in the 17th century, which is five centuries later than the lifetime of Karakush.

As to Şeyh Küşteri, the so-called inventor and patron saint of Turkish shadow theatre, there are many allusions to him in the Karagöz plays, and even the screen is called *Şeyh Küşteri Meydanı*. There are also many references to the fact that he actually lived and was buried in Bursa. Şeyh Küşteri was originally from Persia, where Tabriz was at that time a meeting ground for Persian and Turkish culture. The attributing of the invention of the shadow play to this man, either by written or oral tradition, is a mere legend. Even Evliya introduced him not as the inventor of shadow play but as the inventor of *mizmar*, a kind of pan flute used also in shadow theatre. As in the Ottoman Empire all the artisans were grouped in guilds and each guild had a patron saint who was sometimes real and sometimes fictitious, Şeyh Küşteri can be considered the patron saint of the shadow players; this and nothing more.

Turkish shadow theatre appears to be the product of a historical process whereby the Mameluke-derived shadow play technique was taken over by the Turks from a technical point of view only. In addition, it can be assumed that the Turkish shadow theatre borrowed movement, postures and costumes of the Ottoman puppet theatre along with human actors, such as Ottoman jesters and grotesque dancers, both of which had been in existence long before the advent of shadow theatre. We do not know what early Karagöz figures looked like as the oldest puppets extant today are no more than hundred years old. However we have a rich source of reference in the Ottoman miniatures of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. These depict jesters and grotesque dancers, which conform to the style of Karagöz figures, not only in their costumes and headgear but

³² See P. Casanova, *Qaraqouch, sa légende et son histoire* (Le Caire, 1892).



*A full company of Ortaoyunu players at the turn of this century.
(Note some of the actors are dressed like Karagöz figures)*

*Various clowns, buffoons,
jesters in the 16th century.
(Topkapı Palace MS H.
1344)*



*The Miller's guild in the 18th century giving a clowning skit while
parading. (Note the headgear reminiscent of Karagöz figures).
(Topkapı Palace MS H. 3593)*





A jester in the 17th century.
Compare his hat to that in
fig. 20
(Topkapı Palace No. 408)



Grotesque dancers with
masks in the 17th century.
(Topkapı Palace No. 408)

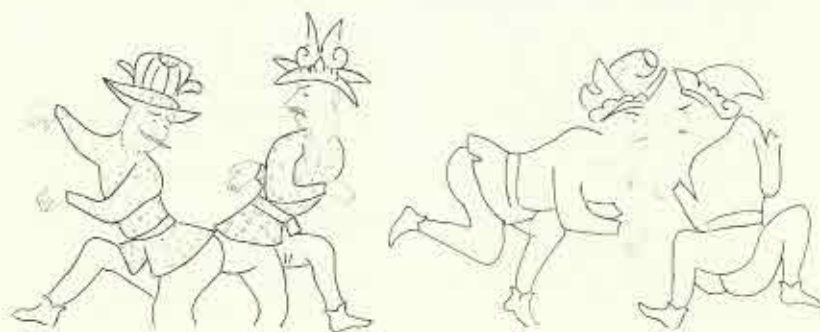
also in their characteristic postures. For example they move in a special sideways fashion, they keep in profile as much as possible and their two hands are clasped at chest-level. These and other deportments are similar or identical to Karagöz figures. Not only were there many different kinds of puppetry and various forms of jesters, but also possibly a form which we can call living puppets, where actors dressed as puppets act if they are giant puppets. One piece of iconographical evidence can be found in a miniature belonging to a series of 437 miniatures depicting the 1582 festival. This very miniature depicts various figures standing beneath the Imperial kiosk where the Sultan and his entourage are watching the entertainments. Among eleven figures which are dressed after the current fashion and in normal proportions, there are two which are painted in rather a monochrome, which appear larger in height as well as in the proportion of their heads to their bodies. Also their positions, while engaged in dialogues, is facing each other after the manner of Karagöz and Hacivat. By a minute examination of the miniature, it is revealed that the masks they are wearing cover not only their faces but the entire head, and one of them seems heavily padded. They are also wearing enormous hats. Their costumes resemble those of Turkish puppets and shadow figures. Comparing these two figures with the other 437 miniatures, which contain hundreds of clowns, entertainers and grotesque dancers, they seem deliberately designed to show themselves as being like puppets. This tradition of shadow theatre, taking its basic postures and style of deportment from puppet theatre and from contemporary jesters, was later reversed. At this later time, actors and puppeteers tried to imitate shadow theatre. As early as 1675, Abdi, who wrote a festivity book concerning a festival for the circumcision of Mehmet IV's sons in Edirne, describes how actors dressed like the puppets in a shadow play, gave a performance.³³ In addition Evliya mentions that the miller's guild, while giving performance, wore clown hats similar to the hat worn by Karagöz. We can assume that between puppet, shadow theatre and human actors, a mutual borrowing of style and technique also took place. All developed from the class of puppeteers, conjurers, story tellers, strolling actors, mimers, musicians and dancers, or an amalgamation of all these types of entertainer. This also explains the close link between, and resemblance of, Karagöz and *Ortaoyunu*.

This is more noticeable from the point of view of visual aspects of shadow theatre, and in respect of its content it definitely maintains a vital relationship with the Turkish popular culture. An unbroken comic tradition may be traced in the early prevalence of the Turkish humour, through satire, parody and the comic spirit. An abundance of these traits in Karagöz is most

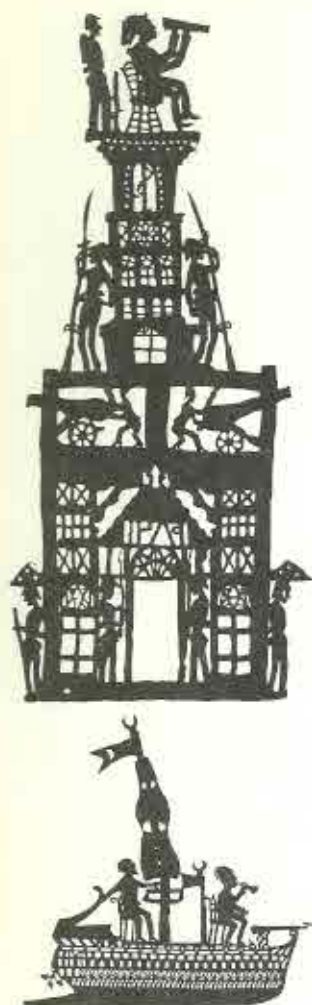
³³ *Surname-i Abdi*, Fatih Millet Library (Istanbul) MS, n. 343, folios 7a, 17a, 93b. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, possesses two French translations of this MS. Bibl. Nat. Suppl. Turc 880 and Nouv. Acq. Fr. 9183.



*Actors dressed as puppets, suggesting Karagöz and Hacivat
(Topkapı Palace MS no. H. 1344)*



*Clowns and Buffoons in
the 18th century.
(Topkapı Palace MS. 3539)*



Two modern Egyptian figures.

probably due to the cultural continuity. In fact, a foreign observer once noted the following:

"... the Turks are a nation possessed of great wit, because, among them, we find some who are fond of playing on words, acrostics and puns. Has he never passed the evening in a Turkish circle of polite company, and heard the discourse of their *Musahibs*, or professional speakers, who, in order make their court to the Great, undertake to carry on the conversation and amuse the company. Acquainted as he is with all the delicacies of the language, he must acknowledge that none are anywhere to be met with, who can relate an amusing tale with more grace and elegance".³⁴

Another interesting line of tradition is brought to light by Hermann Reich in his monumental work. This involves the striking similarity between *mimus* or the mime of antiquities, and Karagöz, which is, according to him, an essential link in the line of succession from classical *mimus* to the Italian *commedia dell'arte*. Hence he devoted a long and complete chapter to Karagöz. He touches not only Karagöz but on almost every other form of the Turkish comic tradition. For instance, while Reich gives the following humorous tale to demonstrate the continuity of Roman *mimus* through to *commedia dell'arte*, the same story is attributed to Nasreddin Hoca, the great Turkish humorist.³⁵ It seems that Nasreddin Hoca decided to teach his donkey the art of going without food to economize. He gradually diminished the animal's barley intake. When the donkey finally died of starvation, the Hoca said «Just as my donkey has learned the art of going without food, it died».

According to Reich, whose theory was later criticized on many accounts, there was a direct link between the classical *mimus* and the *commedia dell'arte*. Roman mime was transplanted to Istanbul and there preserved unaltered to continue its career and enjoy a long and vigorous life in Byzantium. Roman mime actors lived on and did well in Byzantium,³⁶ maintaining an active existence to delight Byzantine society.³⁷ According to Reich, after the capture of Istanbul by the Turks in 1453, among the many scholars who flocked into West, there were many entertainers. Hence in Rome and in Venice, mime through their efforts may have flourished at that late date. Yet cultural interchange at the oral level is often impossible to prove. Where direct influence is clearly impossible to define, the resemblance can often be explained by the fact that both traditions draw upon a common stock of theme, attitude and technique. When Reich published his important work, there were not many Karagöz scenarios published and the studies on Karagöz were

³⁴ M. de Peyssonnel, *Strictures and remarks on the Memoirs of Baron de Tott*, (London, 1786), p. 23.

³⁵ Reich, 460.

³⁶ Reich, 40-134.

³⁷ Reich, 202.

few. So, by this thin material, the deduction that Byzantine and Turkish theatrical forms may have influenced one another, exists as a possibility. Side by side with it dwells the possibility that the similarities are due either to a long cohabitation of the Turks with Byzantium, thereby ascribing it to direct contact, or to a common ancestry. Some people have greatly exaggerated the Byzantine heritage of Turkey. Hermann Reich has suggested an origin, ultimately Byzantine, and has attributed almost everything in Karagöz to the Greek mime, arriving in Turkey via Byzantium. He also claims that everything — plots, structure, characters, comic elements and the like came the same way, though we have no evidence whatsoever that the Byzantines possessed a shadow theatre, let alone a puppet theatre. And when Reich cites as proof a figure, published by Von Luschan, of a warrior in classical attire killing a lion, he mistakenly took this to be Koroğlu, a Turkish counterpart of Heracles. In fact, in Turkish narrative literature, the motif of a man wrestling with lion is common. An example of this is the figure of the popular hero, Demir Pehlivan, seen wrestling with a lion. However it still does not explain why he is dressed in classical attire and a helmet.



Koroğlu wrestling with a lion.

There are two more possible lines of influences. One is direct from the *commedia dell'arte* on Turkish traditional theatre due a close artistic and trade rapport between Ottoman Empire and Italians. A large Italian colony has lived in Istanbul since Mediaeval times. During the year 1524, there is proof that the Italian community in Istanbul held a carnival banquet, where a classical ballet performance included some Turkish dancing girls.

Secondly, there is more important and substantial proof of this considering the Jewish emigration to Turkey via Italy, following their expulsion from Spain and Portugal at the end of the 15th century and at the beginning of the 16th century. Turkey provided religious asylum to some twenty thousand. They were mostly physicians, buffoons and jugglers, many of whom gained access in this capacity to the court of Sultan Selim II. In Turkish source books of an earlier and later period, a wealth of reference is made to the important role Jews played in Turkish popular entertainments. As late as the beginning of this century, Jews were still active in this field and much in demand for festivals at which they performed professionally, exhibiting their skill in puppetry and conjuring. It is interesting to note that these two forms were almost inseparable in Spain. Among Turkish jews were also *Ortaoyunu* actors and shadow puppeteers. Conjuring, which is done by a Merry Andrew, has long standing in Turkey and Spain, and had its place, among the minor dramatic forms³⁸ We should bear in mind that it was

³⁸ For the most detailed and searching discussion, fundamental to the relationship of puppetry and conjuring, in Spain see N. D. Shergold, *A History of the Spanish Stage* (Oxford, 1967) and J. E. Varey, *Minor Dramatic Forms in Spain with Special Reference to Puppets*. Ph. D. Thesis. Cambridge, 1950, 2 vols.



Two early figures of Karagöz.

during the immigration of the Jews that Spain had its first contact with Italian *commedia dell'arte*. There is even a slight chance that the Spanish Jews, before coming to Turkey had become acquainted with shadow theatre, as shadow puppets in Spain were called *sombras chinescas*, perhaps a direct translation of the French term, *ombres chinoises*,³⁹ which suggests introduction through the South of France via the *juglares*. At the same time, we must bear in mind the possibility that puppets and shadow figures could also have been introduced by the Moors, as Moorish *juglares* used to give puppet performances. In addition to this, in the Turkish terminology of popular entertainments, there are quite a number of words which originated in the Spanish. Among these are some which were derived from the Arabic like *Matachina*, *moharrache* and the Spanish *planque*, a sloping wooden ramp, leading from the pit to the stage used and referred to in *Ortaoyunu* as *palanga*, meaning the acting area.

Whether it was through the Byzantines, the Italians, the Spanish or the Jews that Turkey got Karagöz all might have bequeathed a slight influence in their way. However, in essence, Karagöz is a rich cross-section of Turkish culture; namely of poetry, miniature painting, music, folk customs and the oral tradition. And in this deep rooted indigenous tradition, influence from and contribution by the West is very negligible.

So then, all these elements merged and fused in the early preparatory years of the 16th century to result in what is today known as Karagöz. By the 17th century, Karagöz was wholly identified. The name of Karagöz, as well as *kukla* which in Turkish means 'a puppet' appeared for the first time in the 17th century.⁴⁰

In addition to the foreign references to Karagöz⁴¹ in the 17th century and the following centuries, there are several Turkish ones. For instance, Evliya Çelebi gives very valuable

³⁹ See J. E. Varey, *Historia de los titeres en Espana*, (Madrid, 1957), p. 101.

⁴⁰ Though some claim that both 'Karagöz' and 'Kukla' might have appeared prior to the 17th century, their thesis is completely vague and unconvincing. See İlhan Başgöz, "Earlier References to Kukla and Karagöz", *Turcica. Revue d'Etudes Turques*, III (1972), pp. 9-21.

⁴¹ Much information still is available only in travel reports. While dozens of travel accounts deal with Karagöz, a few may be singled out as not being recorded in the Bibliography of Georg Jacob's *Geschichte* and in the footnotes of this present work. Thomas Thornton, *The Present State of Turkey* (London, 1809), II, p. 205; Charles White, *Three Years in Constantinople...*, (London, 1845), I, p. 121; Lucy M. J. Garnett, *The Turkish People* (London, 1909), p. 79; James Dallaway, *Constantinople Ancient and Modern* (London, 1797), p. 82; H. G. Dwight, *Constantinople Old and New* (London, 1915), pp. 270-272; Sir Charles Eliot, *Turkey in Europe* (London, 1908), pp. 109-110; *Nouveaux Voyages dans l'Archipel* (Paris, 1800), III, p. 46; L. P. - B. D'Aubignocs, *La Turquie Nouvelle...*, (Paris, 1839), II, 249 ff; Michaud et Poujoulat, *Correspondance d'Orient*, (Paris, 1834), II, p. 197; Lady Horn by [Emelia Bithynia], *Constantinople. During the Crimean War*, (London, 1863), pp. 334-336.

observations on Karagöz and, in the following accounts, he introduces a contemporary puppeteer by name:

"In Sultan Murad IV's time (1623-1640) the chief of all these mimics was Hasanzade, the player of shadow theatre. He performed twice a week in the Sultan's presence, asking the Emperor's pardon every time before commencing, by reciting the third verse of Sa'adi:

'Though many be the faults I am diseased with,

The fault is virtue which the Lord is pleased with'.

He was a skillful gentleman, who knew Arabic, Persian and music. In this latter art he ranks as a second Farabi. He played the Chinese shades, he wrote beautifully Ta'lik and was a good pyrotechnician. In short, like Cemşid, he was versed in a thousand sciences and arts, and was generous like Hatem-i Ta'i, Ca'fer-i Bermeki. After Şeyh Şazeli, he was the man who gave most renown to the shadow theatre. He contrived to represent in the shadow theatre a second screen, where figures of the smallest size were represented. Being extremely fond of women, he invented all the famous scenes of the Karagöz, which are known by the name of the 'Young Man and Nigâr Play', 'Huveyya Play', 'The Dumb Men's Play', 'Arab Beggar's and Albanian Play', 'Bekri Mustafa, the drunkard and Blind Beggar Play', 'spendthrift Gentleman Play', 'Strolling Gentlemen Play', 'Three Brigand Play', 'The Public Bath Play', and 'Şerbetcizade Play, being the father of Hacivat'. In short, he contrived no less than three hundred different plays for the shadow theatre, in which feat he was out rivalled by nobody, and though all his farces and plays were intended in a mystical sense, yet the spectators received them with hearty laughter. He had no equal in the talent of producing comic dialogues between Hacivat and Karagöz. These could go on a whole night covering a period of fifteen hours, by the reciting of verses, some of which had a deep moral sense. When he came from behind theatre to breathe a little he would drink four dishes of coffee to restore himself, after which when in good humour he would begin to play scenes on the by himself which set all the spectators in an uproar of laughter".⁴²

However, the account in Evliya which attributes to him a repertory of plays extending to some three hundred with dialogues lasting fifteen hours, is a bit of an exaggeration. Nevertheless the titles of plays no doubt are reminiscent of some of the plays which have survived to the present day, as shall be seen later. For instance, 'The Play of Nigâr' is the ancestor of the famous play 'Bloody Nigâr' and 'Hamam' provides the origin of today's well-known 'The Public Bath' play.

To trace the history of Turkish shadow theatre, there is a wealth of material in both Turkish sources and foreign travellers'

⁴² Evliya, p. 654.



A back - screen view of a shadow theatre photographed during an actual performance. (Note the open note book used to refresh the memory of the operator).

accounts. For instance a 17th century French traveller Thévenot is highly informative with regard to details:

He writes "I think, that among their Diversions I may reckon Puppet-plays; for though the Turks suffer no images among them, yet they have puppets... Now they are commonly Jews who gives shows, and I never saw any but them play. They play not as in France and other Countries of Europe, but place themselves in a corner of a room, with a cloth hung before them; and in the upper part of that piece of hangings there is a hole or square window, about two foot every way, with a piece of thin white stuffe over it; behind this they light several candles, and having with the shadow of their hands represented many animals upon this cloth. They make use of little flat figures, which they move so dextrously behind the cloth, that in my opinion it makes a prettier show, than our ways does; and in the mean time they sing several pretty songs in the Turkish and Persian languages, but on most nasty subjects, being full of obscenities; and nevertheless the Turks take great delight in seeing of them."⁴³

However Turkish references are very short, and vague, and in comparison with the foreign account, they are full of errors and inaccuracies. The reason for this is that the travellers did not have a good enough command of Turkish to appreciate the true spirit and literary value of shadow theatre. Another reason was that they usually witnesses third rate shadow performances, not having the opportunity to gain access to the celebrated puppet masters' performances.

Technique and Structure of Karagöz

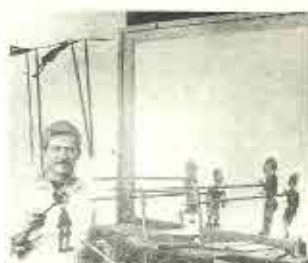
Regarding presentation, the Karagöz stage is separated from the audience by a frame holding a sheet of any white translucent material but preferably fine Egyptian cotton. It is mounted like painter's canvas, stretched taut on a frame. The size of the screen in the past was 2 m x 2,5 m, in more recent times reduced to 1 m x 0.60. The operator stands behind the screen, holding the puppets against it, using an olive oil lamp as a light source from behind. An oil lamp is preferable as it throws a good shadow and makes the characters flicker thus giving them a more life like appearance. Light is fixed behind and just below the screen. The light distance is determined by the need for sharp focus. The puppets are put between the light and the curtain on which their shadows are to be thrown. The screen diffuses the light, and the light shines through the multi-coloured transparent material, making the figures look like stained glass. The puppeteer holds the puppet close against the screen with rods held hori-

⁴³ Thevenot, *Relation d'un voyage fait au Levant* (Paris, 1665), pp. 66-67.

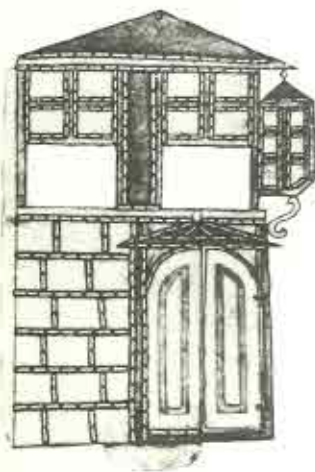
zonally and stretched at right angles to the puppet. With horizontal rods held at right angles to the screen there is far less shadow on the screen, but control is limited. Puppets are operated on the plane of action and the length of the control rods can be adjusted to the socket of the puppets, allowing the puppets to work in the upper areas without the shadow of the operator's hands being visible. Along the bottom edge at the back of the screen is a batten to act as a rest for the legs of the puppets. 'Underneath this there is horizontal ledge on which to put the oil lamps. This ledge also has some holes on its surface in which to stick the supporting rods, the 'puppet trees', as we have already explained.

The figures are flat, clean-cut silhouettes in colour. Animal skin is used in the making of the puppets, especially that of the camel. The skin is well rubbed and soaked in a solution containing bran to remove its oily properties and to make it softer. The skin is dried under the sun during the months of July and August. It is smoothed out and threated until its almost transparent, it is well scraped with a piece of broken glass to remove hairs to make it smooth. Finally it is rubbed and polished. The outline is drawn by applying a mould, a pattern and cut out the lines being then worked over with a small curved knife called *nevrekân*. The cut-out is then stained with translucent vegetable dyes, the colours of which are tender blue, deep purple, leaf-green, olive green, red crimson, terracotta, brown and yellow. Jointing is made with a piece of gut threaded through each two pieces at the point of overlap after which it is knotted on both sides. The action of the figures dictates their shapes. Each of them has a hole somewhere in the upper part of the body, which is reinforced by a double leather piece like a socket into which the control rod may be snugly inserted from either side. A second rod gives Karagöz his distinctive action. A good number of Turkish puppets have an articulation between head and body, which is usually the only articulation, the rest of body below the neck being in one piece. In such puppets, the manipulation rod-hole is in the neck. This way a figure can do a complete somersault with a twist of the rod. Apart from this Karagöz's arm is made up of two joints, his headgear is attached by a loose joint at the back of head, so with a quick flick of the puppeteer's wrist the headgear can fall back to expose Karagöz's bald head. The socket of the rod is carefully placed so that the puppet will balance properly. Figures can thus make sweeping bows to the ground, or be made to incline their bodies backwards to gaze at the sky.

To achieve magical transformations, [fig. 15 and 21-22] the shadow theatre used various devices. For instance, when the action calls for a figure's head to change into a donkey's head, there are actually two heads on the one piece, the donkey's head being concealed behind the body. By turning the rod in one complete revolution, the donkey's head takes the place of the



A 'puppet-tree' (Hayal ağacı) arrangement. On the left, Küçük Ali, the last exponent of shadow theatre as a young man.



Two set figure depicting houses.

A back-screen view of a shadow theatre. (The electric bulb as light source instead of the flickering flame of an oil lamp is wrong).



actual head, which in turn is hidden behind the body. Such is the case in the play *Cazular* ("The Witches"), [fig. 64 and 70] where two rival witches change the heads of their daughter and son, respectively. However, in order to change a character's costume, or strip him naked, two separate representations of the same figure are used. [fig. 7-8 and 47-48] Karagöz is not the only figure which is manipulated by two rods. Other figures among which are Tahir, from the play *Tahir and Zühre*, the coffee grinders; Zühre's father; a gazelle [fig. 65] and a stork [fig. 69]; the rope dancers; the monster and the dancer, have holes variously in both arms, in both jaws, and in both legs. Puppets range in size from twenty five centimetres to over 35 centimetres in height. An average size is twelve inches. The smallest figures are the dwarf, 'beberuhi', which is approximately twenty centimetres in height, [fig. 36] while the tallest figure is Baba Himmet, at little over fifty seven centimetres [fig. 38].

Each shadow play is in three parts: (1) *Mukaddeme* (prologue or introduction), (2) *Muhavere* (dialogue) and *ara muhavere* (an interlude) and (3) *Fasil* (the main plot), which concludes with a brief finale. Although every Karagöz show contains an example of the basic part-prologue-dialogue and *fasil*, the content of the prologue, *muhavere* and *fasil* varies almost independently of the content of the other elements. Any combination of examples of each will do, but one example of each of the three parts is usually included in every show. However each of the elements is perfected as unit in itself, and each show is composed of an apparently random combination of these prefabricated or extempore elements. This individual puppeteer decides which elements to put together for any given show just before the show begins, or sometimes even while it is in progress. Every part and every plot is subject to great expansion or contraction. This does not mean the parts are purely improvisatory. Throughout a shadow theatre repertory there are sets of speeches, and certain standard scenes which never vary in content.

Preceding the prologue is an introductory picture or a screen ornament called *göstermelik* which is pinned to the linen cloth screen and remains there for a while. [fig. 73, 77, 78, 79, 81] This is sometimes an abstract figure or a picture related to the play. In the ancient shadow plays, instead of this, sometimes a short scene was played involving animal figures. When the play begins, the *göstermelik* vanishes to the shrill sound of a whistle called *nareke*. In the prologue, *semâi*, a song is delivered by Hacivat. In this way, Hacivat introduces himself by first reciting a poem *gazel*. In most plays, he offers a prayer to God and also prays on behalf of the Sultan. He also says that what is to follow is not merely a shadow play but mirrors faithfully the world we live in and teaches much. Following this, he announces that he is looking for a pleasant companion who can speak Arabic and Persian, who has knowledge of science and the arts and also a sense of humour. He says that he very much wants

to converse with such a man. After this little speech, he occasionally recites a few couplets. While this is going on, Karagöz's head appears on the right of the screen. He makes several remarks in his own particular style. However, becoming bored with Hacivat's speeches and fine phrases which he persistently confuses, Karagöz eventually comes down onto the stage and the two have argument. Karagöz ends up lying on the floor and in humorous *prose rimée*, complains about Hacivat's treatment. Each time Hacivat appears after this, he receives a blow from Karagöz and promptly disappears from the screen. Phases of the prologue always occur in the same order.

After Karagöz's anger abates, the two begin the *Muhavere*, which is a battle of wit between Hacivat and Karagöz. Contrary to the prologue, the dialogues vary considerably, and are not always connected with the main plot. Each puppet master is inspired and provoked by the actualities and the composition of his audience, as well as by his own imagination, and makes up accordingly his dialogue on the spur of the moment. This varies at each representation, seemed different every evening. Not only does the theme of the dialogue vary, but also its length, according to the skill and imagination of the puppet-master. However, basically, all dialogues are the same, showing the contrast between Hacivat's formal, superficial knowledge and Karagöz' common sense and occasional lack of understanding. This is sometimes derived from an assumed ignorance for the purpose of irony. Sometimes Hacivat criticises Karagöz, making fun of his coarseness, but Karagöz, by his repartee and jokes turns the remarks back against Hacivat and shows up the latter's artificial superficiality. In some dialogues Hacivat asks Karagöz riddles, which Karagöz answers with other riddles. Yet another variation is for Karagöz to relate one of his dreams to Hacivat as though it were a true story, and Hacivat to believe it. At the end of this particular dialogue, Karagöz loses his temper and beats Hacivat who leaves the screen. Karagöz then recites a couplet in which he indicates that he will also leave-which he does. There is a second type of dialogue known as the *gel-geç muhaveresi* ('come-and-go dialogue'), in which Hacivat and Karagöz take turns in appearing briefly on the stage, following up each other's remarks by rhyming. The essential feature of all dialogues is liberation from the constraints of logic, a mocking attitude of habits like, meaningless politeness, fossilized conventions and the insistence on false syllogism. After the dialogue comes the main plot which involves various types of people with different costumes, manner and dialects, and largely devised from a thin scenario. This is called *fasıl* and will be dealt with later in a separate chapter. However, sometimes, between the dialogue and the main plot an additional dialogue is added in order to make the performance longer, called *ara muhaveresi*. This is a kind of interlude or comic skit, in which usually a third, fourth or even fifth figure appears. The form is that while Hacivat is



Göstermelik: A lemon tree.

talking with a third person, Karagöz breaks into the conversation either directly or by means of an aside.

The difficulty in the shadow play technique is that the puppet master's assistant must do almost everything himself, that is play the tambourine, sing songs, introduce each character and hand the puppets in the correct order to the puppet master. He also must hold motionless the characters on stage not involved in that particular part of the action. This is sometimes a lengthy period of time. Sometimes there are one or two musicians to help with the accompaniment. On the other hand, the puppet master himself, without any hesitation, must be able to speak in two different tones of voice, must stutter and nasalise his words, change the inflection of and modulate his voice as the various characters of the play, both masculine and feminine, demand regardless their age. Consequently, he needs to have a very good memory, in order to remember at least twenty eight plots which he adapts to the exigencies of the month Ramazan, the Moslem Lent, during which there is one play for each day. He is also expected to have a good knowledge of poetry and music, since many plays depend on the parody of poetry and songs. A good deal of wit and inventiveness is required, together with the skill to operate puppets simultaneously with their speech. The words were handed down orally, changing only slightly with the years as archaic words and phrases became corrupted into something more easily understood by simple puppet masters. It should be noted that many Karagöz manipulators were at the same time story tellers, *Ortaoyunu* actors or conjurors. Besides, since their activities were confined to certain times of the year, they had also to have a different trade to earn their living. Through the centuries famous puppet masters were Kör Hasanzade Mehmet Çelebi, Bekçi Mehmet, Şerbetçi Emin, Kasımpaşalı Hafız, Hacı Yorgi, Mücellit Rasim, Attar Mehmet Zeki, Berber Sait, Kâtip Salih, Memduh, Şefik Safi, İrfan, Mehmet Ali, Saffet, Sefer Mehmet, Suat, Nazif and Küçük Ali.

Today one can hardly see a Karagöz show since the art has sunk into oblivion, due to the hard competition from the theatres and cinemas and later television. Even to buy good quality Karagöz figures today is almost impossible. Some museums in Turkey and Europe possess good collections of Karagöz figures;¹

¹ Among several foreign shadow collections we can mention the following: Those in the Museum für Volkerkunde (Hamburg), Volkerkunde Museum (Munich), Deutsches Ledermuseum (Offenbach-am Main), Institut für Theaterwissenschaft (Köln), Institut für Literaturwissenschaft (Kiel), Pitt Rivers Museum (Oxford University), The Horniman Museum (Forest Hill, London), Musée International de la Marionnette (Lyon), Musée de l'Homme (Paris), Puppet Museum of Theatre Kukol of Sergei Obraztsov in Moscow (Five old Turkish shadow puppets have been donated by the present writer), Ethnographical Museum in Leningrad contains Central Asian hand puppets (*Kal Korçak*) and shadow tent-show puppets (*çadır hayal*). Among the Turkish collections, the most important are: Topkapı Palace

figures not only depicting the various characters listed in one of the following sections, but also animals, objects and accessories.

Karagöz is basically, one might say exclusively a theatre of laughter. Verbal and non-verbal quips continuously call forth peals of mirth. At its most elementary level, this is achieved by the mere repetition of a gesture, a movement or an episode which previously earned a laugh. Identical scenes, repeated with different characters, are essential elements to the action and nearly all the Karagöz plots are based on that. Repetition of an episode by the same character with subtle variations is also used. In *Kanlı Kavak* ('The Bloody Poplar'), the Albanian forest-guard punishes Karagöz, who has cut down the bewitched poplar tree as a sort of revenge, but each time he is beaten, the guard confuses the number of strokes and starts all over again. In *Bahçe* ('The Garden') Karagöz attempts to trespass the garden many times by various means. This sort of action is repeated in *Hamam* ('The Public Bath'), while in *Balık* ('The Fish') each time a fish caught, the Arab cries out for joy yet the fish always escapes. In *Mal Çıkarma* ('The Treasure Hunt') Canan, from Azerbaijan, who is supposedly an expert in finding treasure, searches in Karagöz' well after disguising himself as a jinn, [fig. 72] and discovers valuable objects. Karagöz also tries his hand but succeeds in finding only worthless things such as a broken sword, a single worn-out shoe, a dead mouse, a crab, and a pail with a hole in the bottom.

Repetition is noted in still another form when a character appears in duplicate. For instance, two identical Karagöz issue onto the scene from opposite sides of the screen, each practically doubling what the other is saying and each claiming that he is real Karagöz. There is also verbal repetition, either by obsessive repeating of the banal or the use of clichés. Sometimes there are characters who insist on introducing the same word into every sentence they utter. Hacivat's three brothers begin each



Canan (The treasure hunter)

Museum (Istanbul), The National Library (Ankara), The Municipal Museum (Istanbul), The Folklore Department of the Ministry of Culture (Ankara). Among those in private collection can be named Celalettin Saracoğlu's collection, Metin And's collection (amounting nearly to 300 pieces). Kâtip Salih, the great shadow innovator of the 19th century died in misery. He had to sell his collection, to an American for a very little money through the intermediary of Ethem Pertev, a pharmacist in Istanbul, just after the First World War. But we do not know what eventually happened to this collection. Professor William Ridgeway in his book *The Dramas and Dramatic Dances of Non-European Races* (Cambridge, 1915), gives a few reproductions of Turkish puppet figures on page 227 from the collection of R. M. Dawkins, which is assumed to contain some twenty five pieces. In 1966 when I visited the USA, Professor Sydney Fisher, a friend, invited me to Ohio State University, to show me a private collection in order to elicit an opinion. The owner's name was not revealed. The collection consisted of several makes, amounting to 156 pieces. Later that collection was bought by the L. A. Mayer Memorial Institute for Islamic Art in Jerusalem, of which an illustrated catalogue has been prepared by Professor Andreas Tietze, but this has not yet been published.



Figures of mules or donkey

sentence with the phrase which gives them their names. These are *Tavtati Kütüpatı*, *Dedi ki* ('He Said'), and *Rastgele* ('By chance'). [fig. 5-6]

Another element is disguise and concealment. Many kinds of disguise are used. In some plays, disguise is a mere attempt to evade detection by assuming a different appearance. In others all pretence of verisimilitude is discarded. Disguise of the first type is designed chiefly to aid intrigue; for instance in *Salıncak* ('The Swing'), the use of female impersonation by *Hacivat* when he assumes the disguise of an old woman to spy on his business partner, *Karagöz*. [fig. 17] Also in *Bahçe* ('The Garden'), where *Karagöz* disguises himself as an old woman in order to enter a garden forbidden to him. Yet again female disguise is used in *Sahte Gelin* ('The False Bride') where *Karagöz* poses as the bride. [fig. 45] *Zenne*, impersonation by men of women (in *Karagöz* shows it is the puppeteer a male voice that impersonates women characters) in traditional Turkish theatre was not a disguise nor an indication of comical intent but was superimposed by conventions and religious necessities. The second kind of disguise is where female impersonation is used with the objective of provoking mere laughter.

Concealment is also used, as in the case where *Karagöz* conceals himself to watch his wife with her lover. In *Yalova Sefası* ('The Pleasure Trip to Yalova') where *Çelebi* and his sweetheart decide to make a trip to that summer resort, several characters in the play, all of them wishing to go along on the same trip, are hidden one after the other by the obliging girl in the sack and the jug, which have been assembled for the purpose of carrying provisions for the journey. [fig. 3-4] After five or six people have hidden in the little room available, *Çelebi* returns and and pulls them out.

In several plays, we find supernatural, illogical and surrealistic things happening. Sometimes pseudo-magical transformation is used for which in most cases no explanation is given, while in others the excuse is very vague. This happens in *Tahmisçiler* ('The Coffee Grinders') in which the donkey carrying *Hacivat* and *Karagöz* breaks in two. They take the donkey to a man, who is supposedly an expert in repairing split donkeys, and he puts the pieces together wrongly so that the donkey's hind legs are sticking up in the air. In *Salıncak* ('The Swing'), the Jew apparently dies and a mock funeral by his co-religionists is conducted, while in *Kırgınlar* ('The Offended Ones'), *Hacivat*'s three brothers are seen to die, but, later, without any logical explanation, they come back to life. By magical transformation at the hand of witches, jinns and a sorcerer, *Karagöz*, *Hacivat*, *Çelebi* and his sweetheart are all turned into various animals such as a donkey and a turtle. In *Mal Çıkarma* ('The Treasure Hunt'), *Canan*, the treasure-hunter is transformed into a horrible-looking monster [fig. 72].

(Continued on page 65)



1. HACIVAT



2. KARAGÖZ



3. KARAGÖZ
in a sack



4. HACIVAT
in a jar.



5. 6. HACIVAT's
two brothers.



7. 8. KARAGÖZ and HACIVAT
as wrestler.



9. KARAGÖZ
(an early figure).



10. BEBERUHI



11. HACIVAT
in a fez.



12. KARAGÖZ and HACIVAT
as boatmen.



13. KARAGÖZ



14. ZENNE



15. HACIVAT
as a goat



16. KARAGÖZ
as a gypsy



17. HACIVAT
as an old woman



18. KARAGÖZ son. 19. HACIVAT s. son.



20. KARAGÖZ
as a jester



21. KARAGÖZ son
as a turtle



22. KARAGÖZ
as a donkey



23. *A Boat,*



24. ZENNE : 25. *A Musician*



26. *Two ZENNES*



27. *A Courtesan*

28. *A Hermaphrodite*



29. *Şirin's kiosk*



30. ZENNE
with a flower



31. *A negro Woman*



32. *A Night Watchman*

33. ZENNE



34. ZENNE
with two children

35. CELEBI



36. BEBERUHI



37. FRENK



39. FRENK
(a collapsible figure.)



38. HİMMET AGA



40. Two BEBERUHİs



41. A Negro Musician



42. FRENK

48. YAHUDI



46. ÇELEBİ
on horseback



44. TIRYAKI

45. KARAOĞUZ
as a woman



47-48. HÜSMEN AĞA
the wrestler.



49. KULHANBEYİ



53. MATİZ



56



50-51. MATİZ



52. EFE



54. ARAB



55. A Figure with a swivel device



56. CANAN

57. ÇELEBİ
with a sword



58. TIRYAKI



59. ÇELEBİ
with a phallus



63. FERHAD



60. TAHİR

61. ARNAVUT



62. ACEM



64. Two Witches



65. AHU (Gazelle)



66. A Bewitched Tree



67. YAHUDI

68. A Djinn



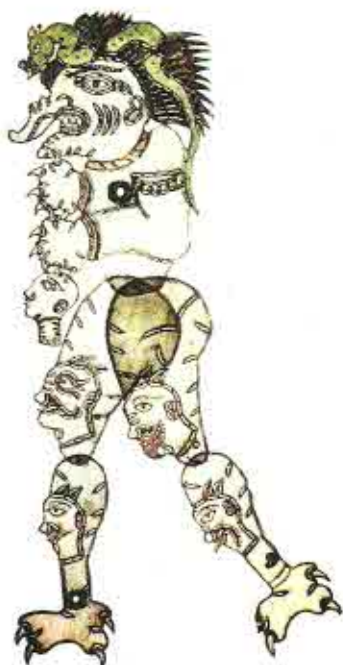
69. A Stark



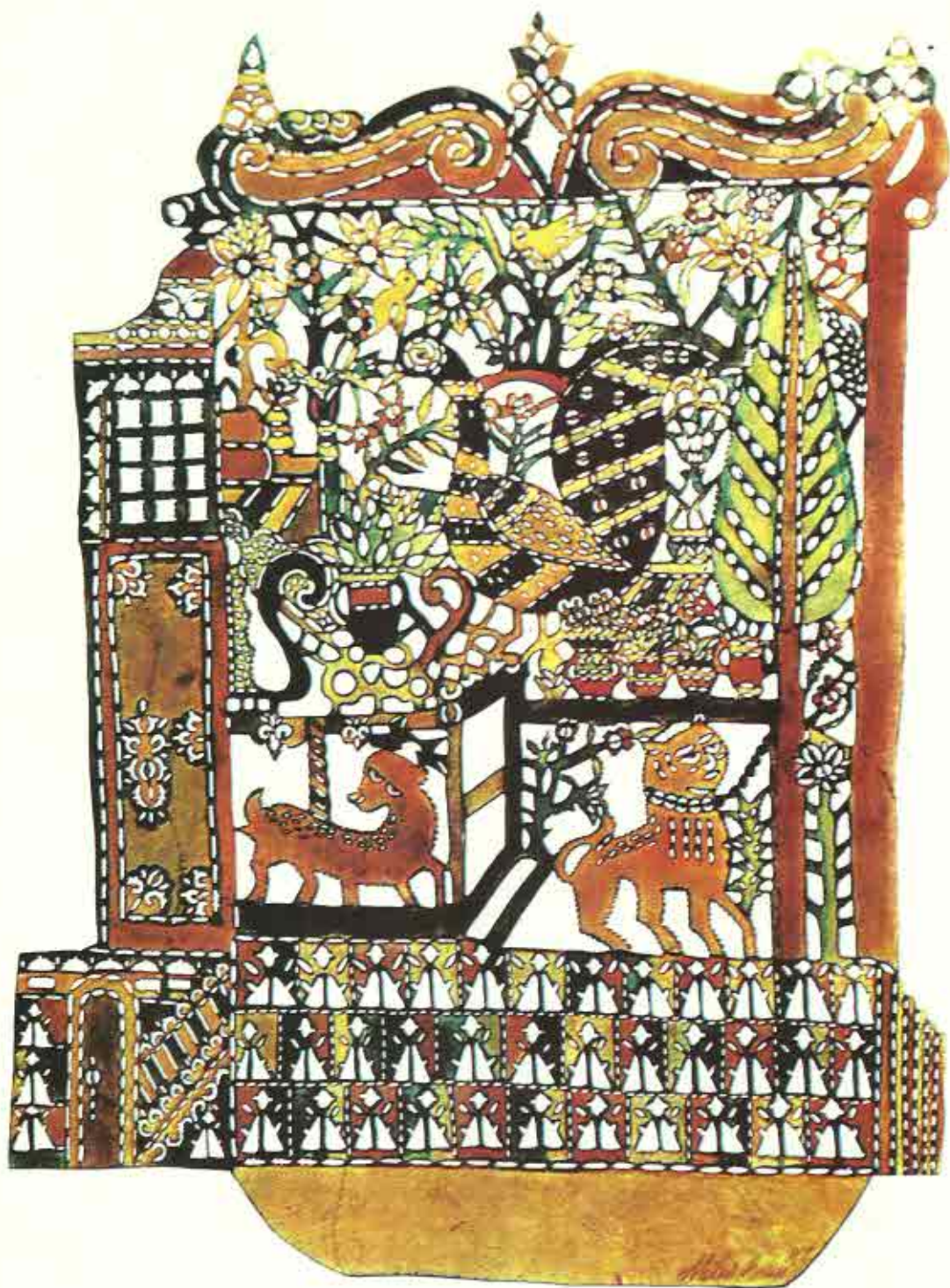
70. *A Witch*



71. *A Camel*
(a composite figure)



72. *A Djinn*
(a composite figure)



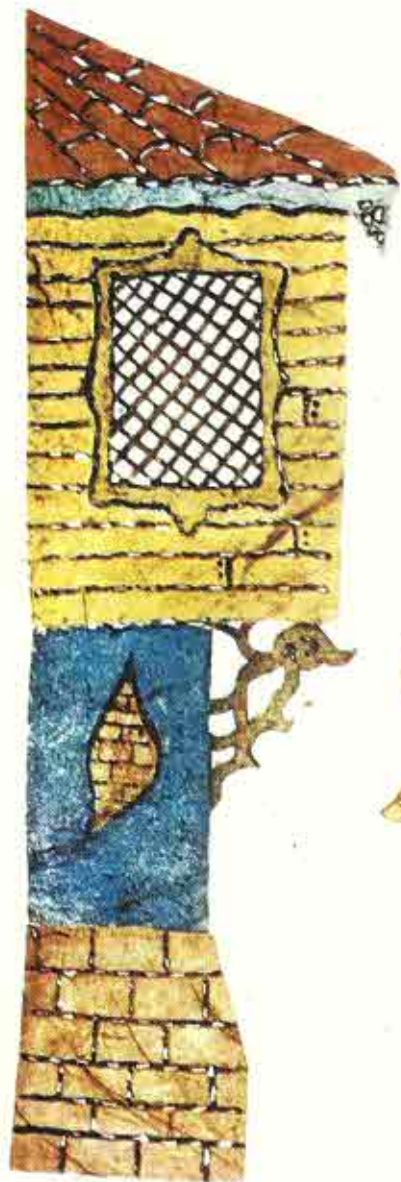
23. GÖSTERMELİK
(A palace garden)



74. A Display of a Dowry *



75. GÖSTERMELİK
(coffee grinders)



77. GÖSTERMELİK (a house)



78. A House and BEBERUHI



78. GÖSTERMELİK



79. GÖSTERMELİK
(a scene from *HAMZANAME*)



80. BOK ANA
(a gypsy woman)



81. GÜSTERMELİK
(Mansion house and garden)



82. A Dragon



83. Two Musicians



84. GÜSTERMELİK
(Burak)



85. A Cat and Dog.

(Continued from page 48)

Contrast and incongruity are other ways of producing laughter. Nearly all the characters in Karagöz are contrasted with the normal, average person, in their manners, behaviour and their language, which is sometimes offered as an ironical comment. For instance, Matiz, the bellowing, bullying drunkard, invariably lays down the law, and acts very much as a police authority. In *Ödüllü* ('The Purse'), the sight of a girl beating all the male wrestlers is incongruous, as is the sight of the woodcutter who comes to perform the circumcision with an axe in *Sünnet* ('The Circumcision'). In *Yazıcı* ('The Public Scribe'), Baba Himmet goes to the public scribe and Karagöz confronts him with paper, quill and inkpot. Himmet has no idea what these items are, but hazards guesses in terms which come within his limited experience. He calls the paper 'a white field', the quill 'an ox-goad' and the inkpot, 'pot of pitch'.

Exaggeration, another chief humorous device, is seen where a character attempts to magnify his achievements. He starts from what he takes to be worse and progresses to what he supposes to be better. The blustering threats and the rage of Tuzsuz, the exaggerated stupidity of the Arab, the fantastic accounts of wrestling of Rumelili, the excessive haste of Laz and Beberuhi, scenes of madness and exaggerated drunkenness are examples of this device. In *Hamam* ('The Public Bath'), two lesbian women are seen to be not on speaking terms. However when they are finally reconciled, sheer emotion causes them both to faint. In another play, *Ferhad and Şirin*, Ferhad swoons each time he sees his sweetheart. Matiz's favourite joke is to pretend to cut off Karagöz head, first asking him to put a handkerchief on the floor, so that when his head falls off, it won't get dirty rolling on the ground.

There is a great deal of slapstick and horse play in Karagöz. For instance, where clowns exploit grotesque physical peculiarities and where Karagöz appears with his head shaved. Further scenes involve hunchbacks, stammerers, dwarfs and madmen among others. Also there is abundance of crude noisy action, tumbling and beating to induce fear. There is also beating of the wrong person by intention or mistake such as where in 'The Coffee Grinders', the Arab or the Dwarf sometimes hit Karagöz's head while in the process of pounding coffee. Sometimes words are used as a rhythm to accompany the movements as when Karagöz beats Hacivat to the rhythm of the lines.

Verbal gags, ludicrous babblings and chattering, nonsensical cross-talk, and other breakings down of conventional language, are part of the rich and varied oral folk tradition. When verbal humour and witticism are required, the chief device is playing around with different dialects and peculiarities and defects of speech. Dialects offer peculiar facilities for puns and every description of play upon words. The alteration of a single letter or even of a single accent is sufficient to change entirely the sense of a word. The rhetorical embellishment, comic elegant diction

Küçük Ali, the last exponent of Karagöz.



and the use of Arabic and Persian words enable Hacivat, Çelebi, Tiryaki and Karagöz to jest through word play involving the twisting of the sense of one word, and the juxtaposition of like-sounding words. As these jokes are explicable only in Turkish, no example can be given here. There are two types verbal juggling in which the comedian and his stooge get entangled in endless semantic speculation and misunderstanding. In one type, we expect a word to mean one thing and we suddenly discover that it means something else. The other sort of word play is where we find, by the side of one word or in place of it, another word of similar sound used to produce a ludicrous contrast in meaning. Both are usually termed puns, though, in the one case we have a different application of the same word, and in the other, two words of different meaning but of the same or similar sound are juxtaposed. At the time of delivery, the second meaning is not intended by the speaker yet the duality is clear to the audience. However, Karagöz usually intends to convey a double meaning, the second meaning being brought out in the parallel dialogue. The use of two words of similar sound is very frequent in Karagöz. Sometimes the words are similar only in their initial phonemes or in their concluding ones. This is usually where the speaker picks up half-heard cues.

Rational language is almost absent; characters are victimized because of their dialects and speech defects. The communication between characters is terribly difficult since the language is not used as a means of communication between the characters but almost as a source of laughter in itself. Karagöz coins words and names out of quasi-meaningless sounds, based on free association, verbal anarchy, a confusion of non-words, and empty phrases. The dialogues, in short, specialize in every comic verbal device-exaggeration, malapropism, punning and inversion.

The language makes use of all the devices of Turkish oral traditions: Proverbs, sallies, riddles, recitations, cock-and-bull stories, metaphors, similes, repetitions, antitheses, cacophonies, hyperboles, garrulity, bombast, boastfulness, learned twaddle, and vulgar or obscene allusions. One important verbal device is *tekerleme*, which has several variants. This is basically a speech formula, which separates the phrases from the coherence of causality and logic. In one form, it is like 'dips' in child and adult games; that is, a method used for counting players out of the game, for starting the game off or awarding a penalty in the game; sometimes it is part of the game itself. *Tekerleme* are gibberish rhymes, usually delivered with accented syllables in nonsensical terms. Another form of *tekerleme* is a formula introduction to fairy tales, sometimes called 'Lie Stories'. These are rambling stories with free associations. To cite one as an example:

"That is a lie, this is a lie, the snake has swallowed the elephant. You who have mounted the ant and have taken

the camel on your lap, have you seen my water buffalo that fell out of the saddle bag." ²

Yet there is another *tekerleme* form which employs dream motif, an indispensable and unvariable element in *Ortaoyunu*, but only occasionally used in Karagöz. If at all, it occurs during the dialogue *muhavere* between Karagöz and Hacivat. In this, Karagöz tells an impossible story with inverted logical reasoning in it, and tries to make the audience believe it. It eventually turns out, however, that Karagöz is merely relating a dream. It contains elements of reality and fantasy in a finely balanced measure. With mounting suspense caused by frustrated expectations, the chief aim of creating surprise for its own sake is achieved.

Another device used by Karagöz involves parodying, echoing and spoonerism of couplets and poems by maintaining the sound and the versification while discarding the sense. The persistent disparity between normal language and the use or misuse of language by the characters, the perpetual principle of *reductio ad absurdum*, the sudden and constant shift in the sense of the speaker's word are the general means of producing laughter.

The Stock Characters in Karagöz

We can not separate the performance and the characters of the shadow play from the social context and ethos of the Ottoman Empire in which it was generated and firmly located in its context. It was a large empire spread over three continents; Europe, Asia and Africa. Its population consisted of several nationalities, religious and ethnic groups, all of which saw Istanbul as their capital, a natural centre.

Karagöz also is firmly rooted in the culture of Istanbul. Shadow theatre is not expected to introduce individualized traits in its characters. They are stock types and no more. Certain definite types have come to be associated in the common mind, not only with nationalities but with occupations. For instance the Anatolian Baba Himmet is invariably a wood cutter, the Jew is dealer in secondhand goods or a moneylender, while the Laz from Black Sea is boatman or a tinsmith. There is, however, a certain amount of truth in generalizing about ethnic and national traits, each being not only a cartoon symbol but also a national type. Actually, if it were possible to define a Turkish Jew at all, one could say he is penurious, thrifty, cunning and

² See Pertev Naili Boratav, *Le "Tekelerleme"; Contribution a l'etude typologique et stylistique du conte populaire turc* (Paris, 1963), p. 43. Also, see İlhan Başgöz and Andreas Tietze, *Bilmece; A Corpus of Turkish Riddles* (University of California Press, 1973), p. 940.

cowardly. At least, the accepted joke concerning the mythical characteristic attributed to the Turkish Jew has travelled so far along these lines that in the average person's mind it has become almost a label for his character. These character traits account, in a way, for a number of the speech idiosyncrasies that affect the figures' dialects. Each native of each separate district has his own special version of the Turkish language, his own peculiarities in the choice of word, inflection, and diction. This serves not only to introduce the character, but also as a comic device. It also provides a main means of creating dramatic tension. For instance during conversation between characters, it results in much comedy from the misunderstandings which can arise. It is due to the respective grammatical vagaries that much of the flavor of these dialects can be captured. Among these can be cited a stubborn insistence on misplacing the negative, verb misuse-especially mistaken verb forms and confusion of tenses. In addition, interrogative sentences abound, as do inversions of sentence structure, common misuse of prepositions and repeated uses of distinctive interjections. Some types are addicted to the use of certain words, or include a number of words from their own native language which have been carried over into the dialect. Dropping entire syllables, lopping off the final syllable in multi-syllabled words; canging, adding or omitting consonants or vowels, are other devices which prevail. Some rely more on the inflection of the voice than on the choice of word. All help to reduce the dialect to a caricature.

We are confronted with three clearly defined groups: (1) The pillars or the basic figures, those who generally headed the list of the characters and form the backbone of the plot and appear with the greatest frequency like: Karagöz and Hacivat; (2) Feminine roles, children, young girls, servants, old women, witches and dancing girls. These characters, though frequently present, occasionally had minor parts to play. However some plays are rich in feminine roles. There are also the wives of Karagöz and Hacivat, their children and Hacivat's brothers; [fig. 5-6: 18-19] (3) *Taklits*, roles rich in comic value, were characters such as professionals, provincials, colonials and foreigners. There were also teratological characters such as dwarfs, stammerers, hunchbacks or mentally defectives like opium addicts and the neighborhood idiot. Many of these were secondary characters but others who were essential to the action. Their weaknesses and characteristics are stressed and stereotyped. For example the Albanian is always ignorant and boastful while the Jew, is seem to be malicious, cowardly and egoistic.

(a) **Karagöz and Hacivat:** [fig. 1-4; 7-9: 11-13] It is always doubtful whether Karagöz and Hacivat ever really existed and, as we have already seen, there are many legends about this. Karagöz was supposed by some to be a gypsy and there are many allusions and much evidence in the plays to support this theory. Karagöz has a round face, his eye is boldly designed

with a large black pupil, hence his name 'Black Eye'. He has a pug nose and a round thick curly black beard. His head, completely bald, sports an enormous turban which, when knocked off, suddenly exposes his bald head which always provokes laughter. In all dialogue between Karagöz and Hacivat, we find Hacivat always uses flowing language full of prose *rimée* while Karagöz uses the language of the common people. His promptness with repartee procured for him his fame and reputation. This contrasts artificiality with simplicity and is the first satire to attain these differences. This contrasting language is also noticeable in Hacivat's erudition. He can recite famous poems, has a vast knowledge of music, is conversant with the names of various rare spices, the terminology of gardening, many varied encyclopaedic extracts, and with the etiquette of the aristocracy. This however is superficial and gives him only a scholastic type of importance. Karagöz on the other hand only thinks of making a living for himself and his family. Because he has no trade, he is usually unemployed and fails to provide for his family, and has enough sense to realize that to rectify this, he does not need Hacivat's superficial knowledge. Though he is stupid and easily taken in, he is constantly able to deceive Hacivat and others.

Hacivat is a reflective character with a pointed turned-up beard. Each movement is well calculated and worked out before hand. Karagöz, on the contrary is impulsive and his character is shown by his speech and behaviour. Hacivat's reasoning limits his actions. Even though while on the screen, he makes few gestures with hands, Karagöz is the more dynamic and energetic. Where Hacivat is always ready to accept the situation and maintain the status quo and the establishment, Karagöz is always eager to try out new ideas and constantly misbehaves himself. The French poet, Gérard de Nerval, stressed this point in the following manner:

"In the modern plays, this gentleman [Karagöz] always belongs to the opposition. He is either the scoffer of the middle-classes or a man of the people whose common sense finds something to criticise in the acts of the lesser authorities. When police regulations, for the first time, decreed that after nightfall no one should go out without a lantern, Karagöz made his appearance with a lantern, suspended in an unusual manner, imprudently jeering at the authorities because the regulations did not say that there must be a candle in the lantern. When he was arrested by the police and released again after it had been ascertained that he was in the right, he appeared once more with a lantern containing a candle that he had neglected to light... Karagöz is allowed freedom of speech; he always defies the rod, the sabre and the rope".¹

¹ Gérard de Nerval, *Voyage en Orient* (Paris, 1861), I, p. 201.



Hacivat - Karagöz.





Dames (zenne).

Hacivat is always bound by the moral principles of the upper class and can easily adapt himself to these principles. He sometimes becomes instrumental in providing pleasure for the upper classes and is always worried that Karagöz's tactlessness will spoil these pleasures. Karagöz, the traditional symbol of the "little man", on the other hand, finds that his tactless behaviour generally upsets most intrigues. Hacivat also serves as a foil to each character, underlining their helplessness and distress. Most of these lesser characters depend upon the machination of Hacivat to provide either the needed money, job or house. He is loquacious, credulous and good natured. Usually Hacivat offers useful advice to others, aiding them in their schemes. Because of his knowledge of etiquette and language and his opportunism, he is a most desirable, likeable character in the neighbourhood. He is not only the local headman but is looked upon as counsellor, especially by the neighbourhood spendthrift. When he partners Karagöz in various undertakings, he prefers merely to find the clients and share the profit. Conversely Karagöz is not respected. He is always insulted by the dandies, is a target for the anger of the opium addict, a victim of the village idiot's practical jokes and the threats of the neighbourhood drunkards.

(b) **Women** in Karagöz plays are young, middle-aged and old, flighty, quarrelsome, only just faithful and always prone to gossip. [fig. 14; 24; 26; 27; 30; 33-34] The main type is always flighty and given to intrigue. In nearly every play, this type causes a scandal in the neighbourhood. Karagöz's wife often abuses him for not feeding her and not clothing her. As the women in Karagöz are always dubbed by male puppeteers, they speak in cracked voices. They wear a loose, sleeved, cloak-like garment called *ferace*, two pieces of fine muslin or tarlatan called *yaşmak*, folded and pinned in such a way that one edge covers the mouth and lower part of nose and the other passes across the brow above the eyes, while the rest hangs behind. As the veil is very thin, the features can be quite clearly seen. They wear a blue bonnet called *hotoz*, patent leather or velvet slippers on their feet and each carries an umbrella. Some wear a red *ferace*, a black alpaca thrown over the head and held by a pin under the chin, entirely concealing the face. Courtesans always have their breasts half or fully exposed. [fig. 27] Some wear slipper boots of yellow Morocco leather called *çedik* and carry a stick in their hand. If the women character represents a Negro slave, she wears black gloves, a red *ferace*, red *pabuç* (a strong soled shoe) and a white head band.

(c) **Çelebi**: [fig. 42; 46; 59] Here is an old account describing this fellow:

"The man of gallantry is a character not strange to the Turks. I have known there, intriguing young fellows and maitres, called in Turkish Zenpare Tchlebis, who have kept a list of all the women celebrated for their beauty and employed themselves perpetually in devising schemes to obtain their

acquaintance, lavishing all their fortune to procure interviews, and even taking their boast that they had succeeded"².

Çelebi is presented in a sympathetic light. He is not caricatured and ridiculed as are so many of the other characters. Usually he is a dandified young man whose love for a courtesan or a girl of good family motivates the action, and provides the plays with plots. We notice he has the ability to charm the opposite sex. Firstly, a *zampara*, a gallant, and an elegant dandy, he is also young, rich and a spend-thrift, who assumes a careful and rather self-conscious elegance of dress and, in the type of stock-role he plays, runs after women, being a well-versed but flighty youth. He speaks with an educated Istanbul accent, pouring out his Arabic and other learned phrases. He is dressed in European style. He wears a pince-nez, he carries a cane and sports patent leather shoes. He wears a clerical style frock-coat, which in cut, hue and the shape of the collar, resembles precisely the 'stamboulina', so named from its origin in Istanbul.

(d) **Tiryaki**, [fig. 44; 58] the opium addict, spends all his time smoking opium and sleeping in the neighbourhood coffee house. He can easily be identified by his pipe, his fan and a huge humped shoulder. He is a flippant type but always tries to look serious. He speaks like *Hacivat* but has a bad habit of frequently going to sleep in the middle of a conversation and snoring loudly. He is inclined to make mountains out of molehills. For mimics, the imitation of *Tiryaki* had been very popular. *Evliya* mentions the following, when he was introducing a famous mimic of his time: "His brother, not a less clever mimic, who was himself an opium addict, had the greatest success in representing their ridiculous fancies. A *Tiryaki* smoking, cuts his own finger, which bleeds amazingly. He bleeds so much that he is falling down. At last he is told that the bleeding will not cease till a boy shall paint with his own finger's blood the letter *Elif* on his face".

(e) **Bebe Ruhi**, the Dwarf, [fig. 10; 36; 40 and 76] has an impediment in his speech and pronounces *r* and *s* as *y*. He asks the same questions over and over again until people become tired of listening to him. Sometimes he is a dwarf and sometimes a hunchback. When he is a dwarf he is called by such names as *Beberuhi*, or *Altı Kulaç* ('Six-fathom'), and is shown to be fidgety, talkative and extremely boastful. He often does odd jobs around the neighbourhood and is somewhat spoiled by the pity of the locals. *Karagöz*, on many occasions, has to beat him in order to get rid of him.

(f) **Drunkard and Braggart**: [fig. 50-51; 53] He always uses slang and *Karagöz* cannot understand him. He occasionally threatens *Karagöz* but when the latter becomes angry, the drunkard shows his cowardice and runs away. He blusters in everywhere with his armoury of weapons and lays down the law, as



Dandies (çelebi).



Dwarf (Beberuhi).

² M. de Peyssonnel, pp. 16-17.



Kayserili (The Man from Kayseri)



Drunkard (Matiz)



An Armenian from Van, Ayvaz



Opium-Smoker (tiryaki)

he sees it. His threats are by word rather than by action. He is tipsy, loquacious, and moves like a drunkard. Matiz is another name for him. However he is quite often harmless in spite of his appearance and loud voice, yet a sharp streak of sadism is nevertheless apparent. He is always ready to sing. He is a braggart and always interferes when there is any kind of immoral situation. Authority is represented by this character, sometimes as a kind of gendarme, and at others a *deus ex machine* who administers justice. He does not always uphold the law as he is in league with some of the immoral women of the neighbourhood. He is extremely proud of having murdered several people himself, including his own children and family. He has unique methods for killing. He is fond of relating the details of these murders and the locals are so frightened of him that they obey all his orders without question. One of his jokes is to pretend to cut off Karagöz' head. When Karagöz tries to avoid having his head cut off, Matiz reproaches him saying: "Would you begrudge such a rotten and worthless head?". It is certain that there were many different types of drunkard throughout the ages. Swagging Tuzsuz Deli Bekir who blusters and threatens, carrying a wicked-looking sword and spreading terror in his wake is another. He comes in towards the end of the piece and makes short work of Karagöz and others. Another kind is the rowdy *Külhanbeyi*. [fig. 49] His jacket is slung over one shoulder and his walk is lopsided. Around his fez there is a silk scarf, his trousers are hemmed on the lower part; his shoes are low at the back, with egg shaped heels, and he has a silk shawl wrapped down his middle which he tucks in at the waist. He also wears a blue silk shirt, the collar of which is unbuttoned and the sleeves of which are twisted. He holds prayer beads and walks in a unique way. Sometimes instead of being a braggart, he is a swash-buckling character from the Western coast of Turkey where he is known as Efe or Zeybek. He does not act like a drunkard but his appearance makes people obey him. He wears an embroidered jacket which is so short that it barely reaches his elbows. His white cotton *şalvar*, except for their extravagant width, might be a pair of bathing drawers. He has leggings of sheep's wool but his legs, from the middle of the thigh to his socks, are bare. His fez, which is at least eighteen inches high, is wound with a gaily coloured kerchief, fringed and tasselled. Strapped in front of his waist shawl is a capacious leather pocket containing his scimitar, pistols and tobacco. Slung across his back is his long gun. He tries to restore discipline in the neighbourhood all by himself and is usually a man of good intentions. [fig. 52] This completes the descriptions of locals of the neighbourhood.

As the Ottoman Empire consisted of several ethnical groups, its society was rather complex. Most outsiders came to Istanbul to find work or to practice their special trades and crafts. There is a resemblance among the central Anatolian types.

(g) **Turk or Baba Himmet** [fig. 38], for example, is the invincible wood cutter from Anatolia, a tall man (the tallest of the shadow figures, as we have already mentioned), carrying a large axe on his shoulder. Karagöz sometimes tries to get him to hear by speaking the words into his cupped hands and throwing them up to his ear. This method failing, a ladder is brought and Karagöz climbs up it to shout in Baba Himmet's ear. 'Turk' speaks in a rough way and fails to understand many of the things he sees in town. He often uses blasphemy to answer Karagöz but does not become angry when Karagöz teases him about his rough language or calls him a bear. He has a good heart and always thinks and talks about his sweetheart in his own village. Those from Kayseri and Bolu are similar to Turk but are better acquainted with Istanbul life. The man from Kayseri is a seller of salted meat called *pastırma*, a grocer, painter or shoemaker, and the other from Bolu is invariably a cook. Contrary to Turk, they are extremely cunning but to not know much about town etiquette. The one from Kayseri wears a *rad şalvar*, and a high fez with a white riband. Over his shoulder, a short red jacket is worn, on his waist is a belt in which he carries weapons. The man from Eğin is usually a butcher with red, full plaited knee-breeches and a belt in which he sports a gun. He wears a short red jacket and a fez.

(h) **Laz**, who comes from the Black Sea coast, is either a boatman, a woolbeater or a tinsmith. He has a strong Black Sea Coast accent. He is very talkative and also speaks quickly. He takes approximately fifteen minutes just to say 'hello' and is always very jittery. As he is usually so busy talking himself, he cannot listen to what other people say. He has a habit of becoming angry in a very short time. Karagöz often has to forcibly close Laz's mouth in order to get a word in himself. His clothes include a yellow vest lined with linen, pantaloons, pleated and creased at the back which reaching to the knees and are called *zipka*. On his head he wears a hood (*sargı*). He often dances on the stage a Black Sea dance called *horon*, which is characterized by alert, tense, shivering movements, the trembling of the entire body from head to foot, sudden sharp kneeling and springing up at the rebound. This fits in with the basic traits of his character.

(i) **Rumelili or Muhacir** is the immigrant from the Balkans. He speaks very slowly and is either a wrestler or carter. He often speaks about his village and the fact that he is a wrestler. He is very proud of his wrestling abilities but actually he usually loses his bouts. He always tries to look intelligent and cautious. He is boastful about his supposed success as a wrestler [fig. 47-48].

(j) **Kurd**, is the neighbourhood night watchman and often uses Kurdish words. He has a vacant expression but tries to act in a haughty manner. He wears a conical felt cap, and carries a long staff. He wears sandals of raw hide, blue *şalvar*, a half coat without sleeves and a woollen, motley west.



Opium-smoker (*tiryaki*)



Laz (The Man from Black Sea Coast).



The Kurd.



The Persian (Acem)



The Albanian (Arnavut)



Frenk

(k) **Acem or Persian** [fig. 62] is a trader in shawls, carpets and women's dresses. Either that or he is a money lender. He sometimes enters riding a horse and continually recites poetry which he delivers with emphatic enunciation. He often exaggerates and talks of large sums of money but his actual business transactions usually concern very small sums. He becomes irritable and haughty when Karagöz plays little jokes on him. Hacivat, however, flatters him by calling him 'The Rose of Iran'. He is also a connoisseur of poetry. He wears trousers over a kind of vest lined with linen which reaches to the knees, called *entari* and held up by a white belt. He has a white shirt, a high black lambskin hat, a blue or black robe open in the front with sleeves scarcely reaching to the elbow called *cübbe*. He is usually from Azerbaijan, the Turkish section of Persia.

(l) **Arab** [fig. 54] is a merchant or traveller who wears a shawl on his head, red linen şalvar and sandals with straps. He often has a funny name. He is sometimes a beggar, a sweet seller or a coffee grinder. He has a habit of praying whenever he has to pay money and sometimes when he receives money he pretends to pray for the giver but actually curses him. He is very stupid and cannot grasp things easily. His conversation consists merely of repetitious questions such as "Who?, Whom?, When?, Where? or What?" which he continually repeats, speaking in either the Egyptian or the Damascus dialect. Another type of Arab is the negro, 'Arab' also meaning 'negro' in Turkish. He is shown as a caricature of a eunuch both in dialect and stupidity. [fig. 41]

(m) **Albanian (Arnavut)** either sells a drink made of fermented millet called *boza*, or he is a gardener, a game keeper or a cattle trader. He tries to speak politely but, because of his accent, always creates a humorous impression. He is ignorant and continually sings to himself a song mainly about vegetables. He is also a rogue. When he gets angry, he has a habit of referring to his pistol in an off hand way as though murder were a mere detail. He wears white breeches, baggy at the hips and gathered at the ankles. On his head is a white skull cap. Gaily colored and voluminous towels are swathed around the waist. Completing his ensemble is a wide linen skirt and a red vest. [fig. 61]

(n) **Greek or Frank**, is portrayed as European or Levantine, *à la franca*, being usually by profession a physician. He enters dancing a polka and interpolating Greek or French words in his speech. He speaks the worst Turkish of all the Empire types. He can also be a tailor, a merchant or a tavern keeper. In spite of his broken Turkish, he is somewhat flippant and tries to make puns in Turkish. He is a coward and an unlikeable character. He wears a European costume and carries a hat and a cane. [fig. 37; 39 and 42]

(o) **Armenian** is usually the major domo of a large household. He has no sense of humour, a limited intelligence and is very serious about his work. Called *ayvaz*, he can also appear as a waiter or butler. His garb includes black şalvar, a black

jacket with short sleeves, a red girdle, a red pointed hat or fez and a red apron. Another type of Armenian is a jeweller or fancy draper. Contrary to the first type, he is more refined and appreciates the finer things in life. He plays a Turkish lute but is not successful enough to be able to afford the luxuries of this life. Karagöz always teases him. Alternative clothing could be a long black gown, a fez, trousers and an umbrella with a broken handle.

(p) **Jew (Cut, Yahudi or Çifti)** [fig. 43 and 68], the haggling Jew is a familiar character and is either seen as a money lender, a second hand dealer or a peddler. He tries out many obscene puns on Karagöz and, using his ungrammatical, broken Turkish as an excuse, he maliciously changes Karagöz's name to give it a bad meaning and as a result, Karagöz becomes angry and wants to beat him. He is a malicious and vulgar type. He wears black şalvar, a loose linen robe open in the front called cübbe, and a kaveza, a black hat with a blue turban. There is a sack on his back. When Karagöz pretends to go at him, or even only to suggest that he intends to do so, the Jew begins to shout and scream as though he were actually being severely hurt. When Karagöz makes the motion of tickling him, even while still at a distance, the Jew begins to laugh. While he is complaining in a loud voice he nevertheless always finds time to revile Karagöz. He is a miser and haggler. Even after he agrees on a price, he complains that it is too high and he cannot pay. He is also a coward and when all the other characters in the neighbourhood decide to attack the drunkard, the Jew does not join them but runs away.

These are basic figures and stock characters. On the other hand, each play requires because of the exigency of the plot several additional characters. Here are some to serve as illustrations. The Jews' child, an old Jewess, Jews carrying a coffin, a Jewish rabbi, the conjuror Jew, a malicious witch-like oldy gypsy woman called Bok Ana, [fig. 80] a midwife, a Gypsy, a Tartar, a Circassian, a negro who plays a string instrument, [fig. 41] coffee grinders, [fig. 76], dancing boys, dancing girls, a furnace operator who is an Armenian), a Priest, a servant in the public bath, the chief of the dancers' company, a stammerer, a conjuror's assistant, musicians, [fig. 78: 83] a baby in a cradle, Hacıvat's three brothers, the villain, a himhim (snuffler), a sly insane man, minstrels, a magician, witches [fig. 64 and 70], the drunkard's wife, a rope dancer, women sent to inspect a prospective bride, a pregnant bride, a Circassian slave, Hacıvat's and Karagöz's sons, and daughters, the Laz's son, Tahir, Tahir's father, Zühre's father, the Persian servant, and a hermaphrodite [fig. 28] are among other innumerable character who appear each having different degrees of importance.



A Robbi.



Çerkes (The Circassian)



A Turkish Priest.

Some Representative Karagöz Scenarios

The main plot involves various types of people with different costumes, manners and dialects. Some of these plots have been handed down from generation to generation. Evliya Çelebi lists some of the plays which are used to this day. However some puppeteers or *Ortaoyunu* companies tried to create new plots or vary the old ones by adding or subtracting characters or changing the order of appearance or title. A foreign author even claimed that in the 19th century some Karagöz plots were borrowed from Molière's plays such as *L'Avare*, *Tartuffe*, *Les Fourberies de Scapin*.¹ The plots contain very little intrigue, action is only incidental. One important structural characteristic of these plots is that they are what we can call 'open form' or 'flexible form'. That is, each episode is an entity in itself and independent so that in each different performance these episodes could change places, could be reduced, added to or subtracted from according to the audience's reaction or the puppeteer's wishes, without upsetting the general course. Surviving titles show a resemblance and close parallels between Karagöz and *Ortaoyunu* plots. To classify the plots is far from easy. Some of them parody a particular trade or tradition. The major emphasis of the play appears to be on the portrayal of customs. A foreign observer makes the following remark:

"He [the puppet master] carries on his show through all the details, from the cradle to the wedding, and from the wedding to the grave, with all the alterations of funny episodes".²

For instance the plot might deal with any given scene from social life and show a reaction to this with the "The Circumcision", which satirises the tradition of circumcision, while "The Purse or Karagöz the Wrestler" does the same for the traditional sport of wrestling. "The Poetry Contest" shows how minstrels used to compete with each other in the old days. The play "The Madhouse" is a satire on the old Turkish bedlams, and also on those people who walk about free but who should be in such institutions. In addition, this play pokes fun at the Greek or Italian physician who is himself not much saner than the majority of his patients. So most of the themes exhibit historic lore. In this category of plays, Karagöz has an important role. He wins the poetry contest, he is circumcised and wins at wrestling. In this group we also find Hacivat and Karagöz entering into several business partnerships. In one play, they rent a boat to various characters and in another they hire a swing. In "The Public Scribe", they write letters for people. In these plays Hacivat usually undertakes to find clients for Karagöz. In "The

¹ A. Thalasso, "Molière en Turquie", *Le Moliériste* (December, 1877), pp. 257-67 and (January, 1888), pp. 289-300.

² Samuel S. Cox, *The Isles of the Princes or the Pleasures of Prinkipio* (New York, 1887), p. 107.

Forest", Karagöz runs an open air coffee house while in "The Restaurant" he works as cook.

Another type of plot finds Karagöz mixed up, sometimes unwillingly, in some kind of intrigue. Usually he is trying to protect a woman and ends up having trouble with her numerous admirers. In yet another play Karagöz tries to enter a place where he is neither wanted nor allowed to enter. For example, in "The Public Bath" and "The Garden", he attempts respectively to enter a bath and a garden either by disguising himself or by mingling with other people who are allowed to enter. In all these plays, Karagöz essays to find out why certain things, which are permissible for a privileged class of people, are barred to him. In other types of plays, the intrigue is better developed, using fewer characters but having a more definite plot, some being on the cuckolding theme. Sometimes the subject of the intrigue is a love affair taken from popular stories or legends like *Ferhad and Şirin*, *Tahir and Zühre* where we have two young people in love with each other, the parents of whom put obstacles in their way, while Karagöz and Hacıvat help the young lovers by all kinds of intricate means. Here the adaptation usually leaves out the romantic or tragic side and deals mainly with the humorous or farcical aspect. In most of these plays, Karagöz is the servant who helps to solve the lovers' problems or to soothe the angry father. In all these plays there is unity of action, since they always take place in the same neighbourhood no matter where the original action occurred. In some plays, we find supernatural elements, pseudo-magic transformation to add to the possibilities of disguise. Some plays contain a large amount of song and dance and have a festive conclusion or a colorful parade, such as the nuptial procession of the dowry in "The Big Wedding". [fig. 74]

Most of the extant Karagöz plays have been dictated or transcribed by the Karagöz puppeteer. In other words, they belong to the category of 'dead' plays, that is plays recorded without an audience. Most of the printed texts are generally remote from the original. Even copies written at the direct dictation of the shadow master are unreliable because of the large part improvisation played in these shows. The best collection of scenarios were collected and published by Professor Helmut Ritter in three volumes, both in Turkish and in German. The first volume [Hannover, 1924] contains three scenarios. The second volume [Leipzig/Istanbul, 1941] contains six, while the third volume [Wiesbaden, 1963] collects together nineteen scenarios, all transcribed by Nazif Efendi, a court puppet master. A Turkish author republished Ritter's out of print work in Turkey in three volumes and added a few more scenarios.³ There are other published scenarios in Turkish and German.⁴ Texts in English are

³ Cevdet Kudret, *Karagöz*, volume I (Ankara, 1968), volume II (Ankara, 1969), volume III (Ankara, 1970).

⁴ For a complete list see my *Geleneksel...*, pp. 255-275.



Various figures representing fools (From the play *The Madhouse*).

few. Martinovitch's book contain a few. However a translation in English of "The Big Wedding" has been published recently.⁵ Some versions exist as recorded live on tape, the National Library in Ankara, and the Theater Department of Ankara University having several of these reels. However these are scarce.

Here are the synopsis of some representative scenarios.

Kanlı Nigâr ('The Bloody Nigâr'): Çelebi, the dandy, after swindling two courtesans out of their money, has escaped. He is stopped by them in the street, one of whom is known as Bloody Nigâr. Both women claim rights over him. When they cannot resolve their disputes, women neighbors are called in to decide which is worthy of the handsome young. However each women decides in her own favor. Eventually, Bloody Nigâr drags the young man by force into her house and takes revenge on him for his infidelity by stripping him naked and throwing him out onto the street. A series of types from neighborhood then arrive to find the young man sitting naked. Each volunteers to get back his clothes for him, including Karagöz and Hacivat, yet each is stripped by the two women. Soon there are many naked people in the doorway. Sarı Efe, whom the Bloody Nigâr respects, solves the problem and everyone gets eventually his clothes back.

Yalova Sefası ('The Pleasure Trip to Yalova'): Çelebi, the dandy, wishes to take a trip with his sweetheart to the Spa of Yalova. He therefore buys a large sack and a jar in which to put provisions for the journey. While he is making last minute preparations, Karagöz appears and teases her with stupid, nonsensical stories the young woman who has remained behind with the sack and the jar. For instance he tells her that her boy friend is dead and somebody has set fire to the sea and that Çelebi has been burnt, or that somebody thought that he was a mouthful of food and has swallowed him, and so on. *Taklits* appear, all of whom wish to go on the same trip and are hidden one after the other by the obliging girl in the sack and the jar. Among them is the girl's other lover. When Çelebi comes, he pulls all these people out of the jar and sack where they had been concealed, hoping to travel without paying their fare.

Mandır ('The Dairy Farm'): After a quarrel, Karagöz is abandoned by his wife. He meets a girl in the street and takes her to his house. After a while all the lovers of this girl try to see her and ask Karagöz to carry their versified messages of love, to her. However, while Karagöz agrees to do this, each time he misunderstands and distorts them. They all invite the girl to go on a pleasure trip to a spot called Mandır. Karagöz chases all these people away and asks the girl on each occasion whether there are more people. The girl always replies: "The next one is the last". Finally a drunkard comes and chases

⁵ "The Big Wedding" [tr. by Caroljean Kier], *The Puppetry Journal* xxiv/3 (November-December, 1972), pp. 5-14.

Karagöz from his own house. To get in again, Karagöz asks the help of all the lovers whom he had previously been chased away by him but all show some signs of cowardice.

Kanlı Kavak ('The Bloody Poplar') [fig. 66]: The son of the famous minstrel, Hasan has been imprisoned by the djin of the bewitched poplar tree. When his father implores the spirit to return his son, the djin does so. Meanwhile Karagöz who has been rude to the tree is bewitched by the djin. Eventually Hacıvat rescues him, and changes him back to his normal shape. To take revenge, Karagöz tries to chop down the tree but foresters stop him. In another version, the djin, before kidnapping the child, kidnaps several people passing by.

Karagözün Şairliği ('Karagöz in the Poetry Contest'): Karagöz enters a poetry contest among minstrels and beats all the other poets who present themselves having droll manners and costumes. He wins the prize, not by his talent in improvising poems on given rhymes and themes, but by his rudeness and violence.

Timarhane ('The Madhouse'): Karagöz, by talking too much to madmen who have escaped from an asylum, himself shows signs of insanity. Hacıvat throws him in the Bedlam and chains him up. A few people make fun of him and a Greek (or Italian) doctor recommends absurd drugs to cure him. Hacıvat later saves him from the mad house.

Yazıcı ('The Public Scribe'): Unemployed, Karagöz becomes a public scribe in a haunted shop, where he writes nonsensical letters for his clients. At length he is seen to be haunted by a djin, hired for this purpose by Hacıvat.

Salıncak ('The Swing'): Karagöz and Hacıvat hire out a swing to their customers and Karagöz swindles his partner, Hacıvat, of his share of the takings. To check up on Karagöz's story, that nobody has come to be swung, Hacıvat disguises himself as an old woman. A Jew comes and feigns death and there follows a burial scene in which other Jews bring in a coffin only to be frightened away by Karagöz who heaves the dead Jew out of the coffin.

Ağalık ('Karagöz, a rich Gentleman'): Karagöz becomes rich by breaking the confidence of a rich Persian who had entrusted him with some large sums of money. He then tries to deal with each person who wants to be employed by him. [fig. 11]

Orman ('The Forest'): Karagöz, while running an open air coffee house, becomes the unwilling accomplice of some highwaymen. They are caught after they have robbed several travellers.

Kütahya yahut Çeşme ('Kütahya or the Fountain'): On his own wife's prompting, Hacıvat tells Karagöz that his wife is being unfaithful. Karagöz asks all the neighbours if this is true but gets no comfort. He tells his wife he is going on a trip, hides, and sees her 'chat up' a Çelebi. He knocks on the door of

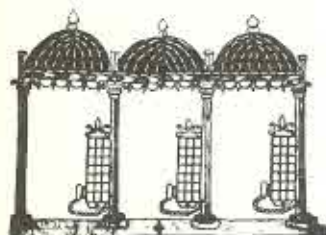
A bewitched and deformed Hacıvat



Karagöz dressed up for the play, 'The Poetry Contest'.



Set piece depicting a fountain.



Set piece depicting Lunatic asylum.



*A display of a Dowry.
(For a very similar figure
see fig. 74.)*

the house and the intruder jumps into a waterjug. Karagöz tells his wife he has forgotten to get water from the fountain and takes the water-jug down to the fountain. Here he discovers that Hacivat's daughter is having a romance with a young man and is planning to give him her father's buried gold. The scheme is that she will ask her father to come and get things she has been washing at the fountain-they'll be in a sack. In fact the lover will be in the same sack and Hacivat himself will unknowingly carry him home. This is the plan but before it can be brought about, Karagöz gives the sack and the jug a kick and the lovers groan. Hacivat and Karagöz then yank them out. Hacivat can no longer turn up his nose at Karagöz.

Kirginlar ('The Offended Ones'): Karagöz kills Hacivat and his three stupid brothers, hides them in a large earthenware jar and sits on it. Hacivat's cunning son succeeds in moving Karagöz from his seat and reveals the murder. Tuzsuz is going to punish him but later he is forgiven.

Cazular ('The Witches') [fig. 64 and 70]: Two rival witches respectively have a son and daughter, who are in love but have quarrelled. Each of the lovers complains to the other's mother. The two witches hold a contest during which several people are transformed into animals.

Sahte Gelin ('The False Bride'): Karagöz is made to disguise himself as a prospective bride to Matiz, in order to make him vow not to drink again. In fact on the nuptial night when Matiz lifts the veil of his bride and finds a bearded Karagöz instead a beautiful bride, he learns his lesson.

Sünnet ('The Circumcision'): Karagöz, though a full grown man, is circumcized unwillingly like a little boy. The ceremony includes the usual spectacles and amusements to distract the boy who lies in bed after the circumcision.

Büyük Evlenme ('The Big Wedding'): This includes a long parade in which the bride's dowry is displayed. [fig. 74] On her wedding night, Karagöz's bride bears a child who is saucy, impertinent and swears obscenely and blasphemously from the moment he is born.

Meyhane ('The Tavern'): This play depicts the adventures of a notorious drunkard called Bakri Mustafa. [fig. 53]

Çivi Baskını ('The Raid', with the pass-word 'nail'): Two courtesans rent and are installed in a house belonging to Karagöz. He suspects that the women are dissolute and capricious. The women agree on a pass-word for their lovers. This password is 'nail', but a special nail. Every time Karagöz tries to enter, he is always unsuccessful as he has only half the pass-word. Thus he is unable to enter, although he lists by name every possible kind of nail. Men come one by one each giving the right pass-word and an orgy begins. Eventually Karagöz manages to enter too. But finally Matiz arrives and is furious to find that they are having an orgy in a respectable neighbourhood, turning

the house into bawdy house. However, eventually he forgives them all.

Hamam ('The Public Bath'): Çelebi, the dandy, has inherited two public baths, each of which is run by a woman who is a notorious lesbian. The women become angry and leave the bathhouses. Now Çelebi wants them back as they are efficient and ask Hacivat's help. In this way, they are reconciled. Karagöz, being jealous, watches his wife through the window of the bathhouse. A fire starts in the bathhouses and everybody comes out naked including Karagöz with half his beard burnt, since the Persian henna-seller has mixed yellow arsenic with the henna. Karagöz is distressed because when there is no bathhouse he will lose the customers for his spice shop which is opposite.

Ödüllü yahut Karagözün Pehlivanlığı ('The Purse or Karagöz, the Wrestler'): The rich father of a girl dies and makes it a condition that his future son-in-law should be able to bend his daughter's arm. This is no mean feat as the girl is very strong. For a long time, people have tried but none have succeeded. In the end, they ask Hacivat whether he knows of anybody who could accomplish this. Karagöz succeeds in doing it but the girl's mother makes another condition; that he should prove himself unbeatable by all other wrestlers. Karagöz accepts this challenge also whereupon all the standard characters of the screen wrestle with Karagöz and are beaten. So Karagöz wins the girl.⁶

Bahçe ('The Garden'): Çelebi has a garden. He entrusts Hacivat with the running and concern of the garden and Hacivat recommends that he make it into a pleasure garden. Karagöz wants to get a job as a pipe player in the garden but Hacivat, who is the manager, refuses. Several people come and enter the garden. When Matiz comes, he says that in a respectable neighbourhood dancing and merriment cannot be allowed so he shuts the garden down until a licence is obtained.

Ferhad and Şirin: Ferhat [^{fig. 63}], a young wall painter, is in love with Şirin, whose mother, a rich widow, does not want Şirin to marry Ferhat because he is poor. Eventually she is willing on one condition. Ferhat must succeed in bringing water from the nearby mountain using only a pickaxe, a challenge which he accepts. So with the help of Karagöz, who is a blacksmith, Ferhat succeeds in bringing the water. Şirin's mother who is still unwilling to accept the bargain, tries magic and other means to separate the two lovers. However by killing the witch called Bok Ana employed by the mother, the two lovers are united.

Tahir and Zühre: A rich gentleman, following the advice of Hacivat, hires Karagöz as major domo in his household. The rich man's daughter, Zühre, and his nephew, Tahir [^{fig. 60}], love each other. But the step mother of Zühre also loves Tahir, so



Set piece depicting a public bath.



Ferhad (above) and Ferhad holding a pickaxe (below)

⁶ For the only published text of this see Metin And, "Eski Bir Karagöz Faslı: Ödüllü ya da Karagöz'ün Pehlivanlığı", *Tiyatro Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2 (1971), pp. 207-237.

Çelebi and his negro
servant in a boat (From
the skit, 'The Fish').



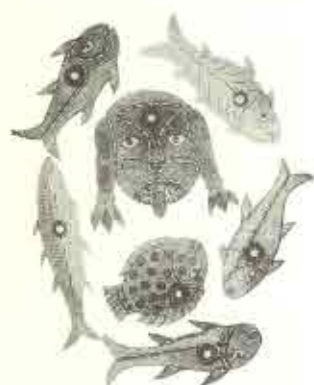
in order to stop their marriage, she decides to change her husband's mind by magic. She enlists the help of Karagöz to put an amulet with magical properties on her husband, in order to make him change his mind when he awakens. In fact, he does change his mind upon awakening and separates the lovers. But later the truth is revealed, and Karagöz explains everything. Not only are the two lovers united but, as a reward, Karagöz also marries a girl from the rich man's household.

Kayık ('The Boat') [fig. 12] Karagöz and Hacıvat, both being unemployed and deserted by their wives, decide to work as boatmen. They hire out a boat to those who want to cross from one side of Bosphorus to the other. They encounter various difficulties and funny episodes with their customers.

Ortaklar ('The Partners'; i.e. A wife in a polygamous household): Karagöz marries a second time, and the religious ceremony is performed by a priest who recites nonsensical prayers. Karagöz' mother-in-law continuously pesters Karagöz by her visits. Later Karagöz's first wife arrives and Karagöz tries to soothe her and hush the matter up but both the first and second wives claim their right over him. The first wife's sister's husband, Matiz, arrives and threatens Karagöz but later forgives him.

Canbazlar ('The Rope Walkers'): In this play, we find a series of incidents which have no relation to one another. First Karagöz learns witchcraft from a sorcerer. Then he practices his magical knowledge by producing from an earthenware jar some of Hacıvat's belongings. These were in fact given by Hacıvat's daughter to her boy friend. Karagöz rides on donkey and encounters three girls with whom he converses. He later gets involved with tight rope walkers, during which he falls from the rope and dies. The gypsies then come to carry his coffin but Karagöz comes to life again.

There are numerous other plots such as **Tahmis** ('The Coffee Grinding'), **Bursalı Leylâ**, **Hain Kâhya** ('The Villainous Major Domo') **Leyla and Mecnun** – and others making some attempts to enrich the number of plays in the Karagöz repertoire. Also two examples should be given of short interludes, *ara muhaveresi*. One is **Yalancı** (The Liar) where Çelebi offers a money reward to the person who can tell him the greatest lie. Karagöz is brought forward by Hacıvat as the best liar. He tells the Çelebi that his father lent Karagöz's father a large sum of money, which he hopes Çelebi will repay. Çelebi is caught: either he must admit of it being just a lie and duly pay the reward or say it isn't a lie and pay off the fictitious debt. The other is **Mal Çıkarma** (The Treasure Hunting) in which Canan, supposedly a well known treasure hunter from Azerbaijan, after transforming himself into a horrible-looking djinn, retrieves from Karagöz's well various valuable objects including candelabras, clocks, necklaces and belts. Karagöz watching this, sends his dogs and chases Canan away, seizing the objects he has found. In turn, he



Various fishes from the
skit 'The Fish'.

decides to do the same by assuming a disguise. He repeats the magical words but succeeds only in bringing out worthless objects such as snakes, rats, spiders and broken coffee pots etc..

Karagöz as an agit prop in the Empire

The early performances of story tellers or theatrical troupes contained political satire, jokes and imitation of high officials, even of prime ministers. That was even more true of Karagöz, but we have not sufficient evidence of this as early Karagöz texts are not available. However there is just enough evidence to believe political and social satire was the basis of early Karagöz shows until the time of Sultan Abdülaziz and Abdülhamit II when censorship became very rigid. Several foreign witnesses in the first half of the 19th century are highly informative about Karagöz being frequently used as a political weapon with which to criticise local political and social abuse. One of these foreign witnesses says that "In Turkey, a country ruled by an absolute monarchy and a totalitarian régime, Karagöz is a character who never deludes himself or is lulled into a sense of security by shutting his eyes to the evils which surround him. On the contrary a Karagöz show is a *risqué-revue*, as fearless as a militant newspaper. No one is spared, except may be the Sultan, Karagöz heaps judgement on the Grand Vizier and sentences him to the prisons of Yedikule. His barbs prove disquietening to foreign ambassadors; he lashes out at the Allied Admirals of the Black Sea fleet, and the generals of the Crimea armies at the time of the Turkish-Russian war of 1854-6. His public is delighted and the government indulgently allows his brash outspokenness".¹

An Englishman finds the dialogue delivered by the puppet master in Karagöz :

"often witty, at times seditious, neither sparing of the Sultan nor his ministers.."²

Another eye-witness account explains at length that "Karagöz defies the censorship, enjoying an unlimited freedom". He goes on to say, "Even the press in Europe is not so aggressive. Countries like America, England and France are much more restricted in political criticism than Turkey, which is a country ruled by an absolute monarch. Karagöz acts like some sort of unfettered press. Actually Karagöz dialogue is much more fearless as it is improvised and not tied down to a written text. Apart from the person of Sultan Abdülmecit, who is considered sacred, Karagöz makes no exception in his attacks. He lashed out at the British and French Admirals in August 1854 for the way in which they slowed down their work. He criticised their



Laz in a sail boat. (This appears at the end of the play of 'The Boat')



Entertainers in a boat.

¹ Louis Enault, *Constantinople et la Turquie* (Paris, 1855), p. 367.

² Adolphe Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey...* (London, 1833), II, p. 201.



Karagöz with a phallus.

manoeuvres and their lack of efficiency in manning their war-ships. Even the Grand Vizier appeared on the screen. He was seen to be tried in mock trial as if he were an infidel. The court, not finding his defence acceptable, sentenced him to a term in prison at Yedikule. If this should have happened in a different country, even a single showing of such seditious material would have been sufficient to promote the author's arrest and exile, where as nothing happened to Karagöz.³

In the same year, 1854, another Western observer confirmed this by saying that no one is exempt from the tongue-in-cheek hilarity of Karagöz. Regardless of whether his target is a pasha, a theologian, a dervish, a banker or a merchant, the Karagöz puppeteer would exhibit people from every social class and occupation in his action. Even a vizier, who watched a Karagöz show incognito, was forced to listen to some bitter facts about himself.⁴

In addition to this, we have a very important witness in a Frenchman, whose father was in Turkey between the years 1820-1870. This gentleman was conversant with all Turkish political affairs and political figures. In a book on his father's experiences, he devoted one long chapter to Karagöz.⁵ In this he claims the basis of the Karagöz play was political, employed for the purpose of social and political satire directed at events and persons current at that time. He gives several illustrations from the several performances he himself attended. According to him, even the Grand Vizier or the Sultan himself was not spared from Karagöz' malicious invective and caustic wit. In one play, the political ideas of the vizier, Georgian Mehmet Reşit Paşa, and his deeds as military man were shown in a humorous tone. In another performance, Karagöz poked fun at the Sultan's son-in-law, who was the chief admiral and a thoroughly worthless man. Commenting on this, Karagöz advised a young man, who seeks to begin his career, by saying, "As you do not know anything, I advise you to become a chief admiral".⁶ In another

³ [Joseph Pierre Agnes] Mery, *Constantinople et la Mer Noire* (Paris, 1855), p. 358.

⁴ Ubicini, *La Turquie Actuelle*, (Paris, 1855), pp. 317-18.

⁵ Wanda, *Souvenirs Anecdotes sur la Turquie [1820-1870]* (Paris, 1884) pp. 271-78.

⁶ There is also in this connection two incidents recorded in Mehmed bun Hüseyin Nasuh's *Annexe Chronicle* of the Ottoman Dynasty, which happened during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim I (1640-1648), known as Ibrahim the Mad. In the first instance, the Sultan gave a gypsy puppeteer by the name Ahmet, the rank of the chief officer of the Janissary corps. In the second instance another puppeteer, Kör Musluoğlu, gave a puppet show to the Sultan, depicting a mock battle on the screen between a galley and a merchant boat in the sea near a strong fortress on the cliffs. The sultan was so pleased with this naval battle, he wanted to reward the puppet master by giving him the rank of the grand admiral of the Ottoman fleet. However, both puppet-men, knowing full well that they might easily lose their lives at the hands of the military later on for their rashness, prudently and humbly turned down this honour. See Georg Jacob, pp. 118-119.



Karagöz with a giant size phallus (From the Viennese collection.)

performance, it was Topal Hüsrev Paşa and his homosexual preferences which provided a target for Karagöz. However, when Karagöz, during the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz brought an important pasha, Kıbrıslı Mehmet Paşa, to the screen, showing how his family was corrupted and stole money from the state, that proved too much for the official censor. As a result political satire was banned strictly and forever. The author goes on to say that since that time, Karagöz has fallen into childish vacuity and meaningless farce. As a matter of fact, Karagöz was never able to restore this pungent side of his character again. Yet this tradition of the political spirit of Karagöz survived in the newspapers, many of them bearing titles taken from Karagöz and *Ortaoyunu*. Karagöz, the last of these sheets, was published until recently as a popular political weekly.

Another freedom enjoyed by Karagöz, as well as by other forms of Turkish popular theatre, is its obscenity and extreme licentiousness. This is a very natural thing for popular theatres in the manner of *commedia dell'arte*. An English observer, whose account of a Karagöz performance we have already referred to, pointed out that:

"Then followed a scene with the 'fair ladies' which I may not describe-not even in Latin".⁷

Many foreign observers' account confirm this.⁸ Some observers were shocked at seeing women and children at these obscene performances of Karagöz.⁹ Another observer having the same experience, asked an elderly Turk sitting next to him, who had brought two very young girls to the show, how he could allow children to see such scenes of obscenity. The answer was: "They should learn; sooner or later they should know; it is better for them learn these facts than to be ignorant in these matters".¹⁰ Even in the year of 1861, in Pera, a fashionable quarter of Istanbul, a permanent Karagöz theatre built in a popular amusement spot, Petit Jardin des Fleurs, was opened to public and attracted large crowds even though the entertainment offered was very obscene.¹¹

The male organ of generation, the phallus, was an accepted part of the Karagöz show. A foreign observer describes a Karagöz performance in which a phallus is featured.¹² It is even believed that the large, moveable arm of Karagöz, had originally been

⁷ Davey, I, p. 348.

⁸ Thevenot, p. 67; David Nerreter, *Neueröffnete Mahometanische Moschee*, (Nürnberg, 1703), p. 365; G. A. Olivier, *Voyage dans l'empire ottoman*, (Paris, 1800), p. 139; Gerard de Nerval, p. 200; Charles Rolland, *La Turquie Contemporaine* (Paris, 1854), pp. 144-148; Theophile Gautier, *Constantinople* (Paris, 1856), p. 173; Edmond de Amicis, *Constantinople*, (Paris, 1885), p. 133; White, I, p. 121.

⁹ Lemerrier de Neuville, *Historie Anecdodiques* (Paris, 1892), p. 70; Hermanu Vambéry, *Sittenbilder aus dem Morgenlande* (Berlin, 1876), p. 34; Ivan de Woestyne, *Voyage au pays des Bachi-Bouzoucks*, (Paris, 1876), p. 308.

¹⁰ Wanda, pp. 277-278.

¹¹ *Journal de Constantinople*, 30 September 1861.

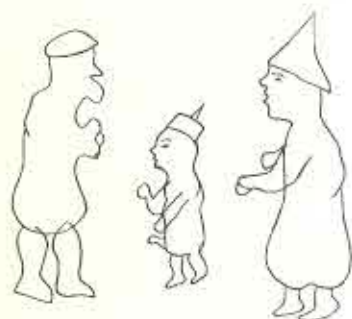
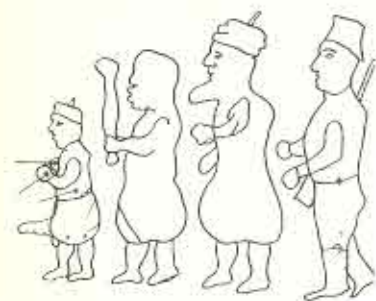
¹² Sevin, *Lettres sur Constantinople* (Paris, 1802), p. 8.



Newspapers bearing titles taken from Karagöz and Ortaoyunu.



Two modern Egyptian figures.



Figures in Tunisian shadow theatre. From left to right above: Karagöz, the negro Mesud, Breytu the Jew, Süleyman the Turk; below: Haziwaz (Hacıvad), Karagoz al-Saghir (small), Fatma.



The Opium Smoker
Tunisian figures.

a phallus. Several Karagöz figures bearing a phallus exist. The present book reproduces three of them. [fig. 59] In one of these, a figure representing Karagöz, probably fairly old, carries a large-size, stylized phallus. Evliya, while he was enumerating ten titles of the play of the contemporary puppet master, Kôr Hasan-zade Mehmet Çelebi's repertory, amounting to some 300 plays, mentions one where:

"Civan Nigâr, a young girl, on entering a bath, was violated by Gazi Boşnak. Karagöz, tied by his phallus, is dragged out of the bath naked".¹³

The phallus is not only featured in Karagöz shows, but is an important part of the rural rituals and skits even to this day. It was often exhibited in public festivals. For instance, during the circumcision ceremony for Mehmet IV's son, Mustafa, which was celebrated in a festival lasting fifteen days in Edirne, a foreign observer mentions that a jester, attired in a costume made of straw and paper, rode on a donkey, carrying a giant size phallus. With this, he saluted the onlookers, while lady spectators, modestly shrouded behind their veils, or hiding their faces in their hands, stared at the sight between their fingers.¹⁴ Some observers towards the end of 19th century and the beginning of 20th say that the government imposed restrictions and enforced police control over the Karagöz performances, However, Karagöz being an ex tempore performance, obscenity in a more limited form still continued.¹⁵

Regardless of whether the introduction of shadow theatre is credited to the Egyptians or not, Karagöz has developed in its maturity into a purely Turkish phenomenon and, under Turkish rule, the Karagöz became popular throughout the Near East Arab countries passing over into Northern Africa and the Balkan countries. Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Greece copied the Turkish Karagöz and modelled book plays and characters on the Turkish patterns, which they duly assimilated into their own culture. Not only that, but they also used Karagöz a vehicle for political comment, even as an *agit-prop*. For instance, in Aleppo in the 18th century, Karagöz lampooned the Janissaries who had been discredited since the war of 1786 with Russia. This delighted the people and he, Karagöz, enjoyed a widespread

¹³ Until very recently researchers basing their findings on the error in spelling in the printed text of Evliya, were mistaken about the word *kir* meaning 'a male organ of reproduction'. Only recently, comparing the published text with one of the more reliable manuscripts of Evliya, was it realized that this word means a phallus. In fact, the 18th century humorist poet, Kâni, has a line in his *Hezelliyyat* ('Facetiae') which reads: "Erect and shows itself like Karagöz's prick". Like other lines from the same poet, this shows that Karagöz's phallus was almost a proverbial accessory.

¹⁴ *Memoires du Sieur de la Croix* (Paris, 1684), pp. 119-120.

¹⁵ *Odysseus, Turkey in Europe* (London, 1900), p. 114; Afioun Efendi, *Paradoxes sur la Turquie* (Paris, 1908), pp. 179-80.

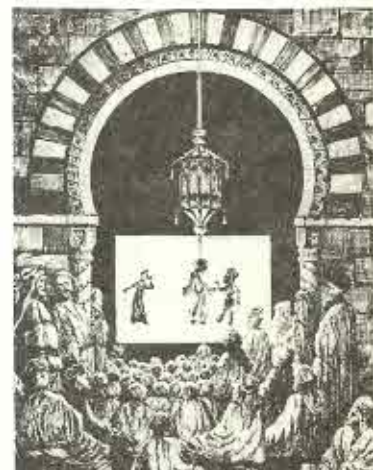
popularity. The result of this was that the authorities banned Karagöz performances thereafter.¹⁶

In the Magrib, there is a legend on the origin of Karagöz showing how the *raison d'être* of Karagöz was in fact political.¹⁷ In Istanbul, so the legend goes, there was a very honest and conscientious man who suffered through observing the corruption of the Sultan's ministers and viziers. Wondering how to reach the Sultan to advise him of this in order to open the Sultan's eyes to the mismanagement of his government, this man created a show which he called Karagöz. The Sultan heard of the reputation of this licentious show and came to see it. On that particular evening, instead of the usual jokes and obscenity, the Karagöz screen represented political figures and depicted their corruption. As a result of what he saw, the Sultan punished all his viziers, appointing in their place as his Grand Vizier, this man 'Karakuz'. After that, many people followed his example in giving Karagöz shows.

In Algiers, Karagöz expressed anti-French sentiments on the screen. One example is where Karagöz is seen beating French soldiers with large size phallus. Satan appears on the screen in French uniform. The French authorities banned all Karagöz performances in 1843 for expressing anti-colonial ideology.¹⁸ However performances continued to be given secretly at rare intervals. For instance, the *doyen* of the Algerian theatre Mahieddine Bachetarzi, a member of a well-established Turkish family, tells in his memoirs how, in 1914 he watched a performance in Algiers given by a puppeteer, Ali Tourki, who was most probably Turkish.¹⁹ In Tripoli, before it was occupied by Italians, two incidents were recorded of Karagöz shows. The first one happened in 1910. Karagöz was seen taking Paris by siege in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War. In this play, a mouse was sold for one gold piece satirising the starvation which raged in Paris during that year. Also the French army is caricaturised. In the second incident also from the year 1910, the dethroning of Abdülhamit II was depicted followed by the public rejoicing celebrating this event and the adopting of the new constitution of 1908. In 1911 the authorities banned all political references in Karagöz performances.²⁰



An Arab figure depicting Antara, the hero of the Romance of Antar.



A performance of the Arabic shadow theatre.

¹⁶ Alexander Russell, *Naturgeschichte von Aleppo* (Göttingen, 1797), I, p. 198.

¹⁷ M. Quedenfeldt, "Das Türkische Schattenspiele im Magrib", *Ausland*, 63 (1890).

¹⁸ Dr. Bernard, *L'Algérie qui s'en va* (Paris, 1887), pp. 66-67; Puckler-Muskau, *Chronique, Lettres, Journal de voyage* (Paris 1836-37), II, pp. 99-100; L. Piesse, *Itinéraire de l'Algérie, de la Tunisie et de Tanger*, (Paris, 1885), p. 36.

¹⁹ Mahieddine Bachetarzi, *Memoires* [1919-1939], (Sned-Alger, 1968), p. 424.

²⁰ Wilhelm Hoenerbach, *Das nordafrikanische Schattentheater* (Mainz, 1959), pp. 43-44.



Kaloza

Baba Hwaneh



The Jew

Tunisian figures.

In Tunisia, the plots of many plays, the stock characters, the dialogue sequences and the visual sequences are a continuation of Turkish tradition, except that Tunisian figures are more primitive, monochromatic and only just translucent. It is interesting to note that although the Egyptian shadow theatre might at first have influenced the Turkish shadow productions, the Turkish Karagöz succeeded later in leaving its imprint on the Egyptian shadow theatre. Though localized in subject matter of course, some of the Egyptian performances were in Turkish. The Hamburg Volkerkunde Museum possesses some later Egyptian shadow puppets, which are quite different from early Egyptian figures. This is especially so in the case of the ones discovered by Kahle in Menzale. The new ones are similar in style to Turkish figures. It can be maintained that the Egyptian puppet theatre derived from Turkish Karagöz its essential characteristic. The name, the Egyptian called their puppet theatre 'Aragoz' which is a slight variation on Karagöz by omitting the initial K.²¹

The Syrian shadow play bears the mark of almost all the Turkish characteristics. It was widely popular in Damascus, Beirut, Aleppo, Jaffa and Jerusalem.²²

There is a wealth of references to the fact that Karagöz was planted in the Balkan countries, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Rumania²³ and Greece during the Ottoman occupation, soon becoming widely popular in those places. For four centuries the Ottoman Empire politically and culturally dominated most of these countries. The basic technique of performance there closely followed that of the Turkish shadow theatre and the puppet figures were designed in Turkish style.

Karagöz was first introduced into Greece and established there as an art form by John Vrahalis in 1860. Prior to that time, and especially before the 1821 revolution, shadow puppeteers of Turkish origin or inspiration used to give the occasional performance and indeed their Karagöz shows were the meeting places for leaders of movements planning the 1821 uprising.²⁴ Just as the Turkish shadow theatre was transplanted

²¹ Fr. Kern, "Das ägyptische Schattentheater", in Josef Horowitz, *Spuren griechischer Mimen im Orient* (Berlin, 1905); also, see "A glance at the origins of the Arab Theatre", *Le Théâtre Dans Le Monde*, (November-December, 1965), p. 609.

²² See Jacob M. Landau, *Studies in The Arab Theatre and Cinema* (Philadelphia, 1958); Some writers are of the opinion Shadow theatre existed in Iran. The only book on the Iranian theatre is Medjid Rezvani's *Le Théâtre et la Danse en Iran* (Paris, 1962). Inaccurate, full of factual errors, confusing Turkish shadow theatre by claiming ownership on behalf of Persia.

²³ There is a wealth of sources on the Turkish shadow theatre in Rumania. So much so that even the word *Caraghios* is included in the Rumanian language as an adjective, meaning funny, comic, ridicule. See *Dictionarul Limbii Romine literare Contemporane* (1955).

²⁴ See Demetrios Loucatos, "La Tradition et la vie populaire grecque dans les représentations de Karaghiozis", *Quand les Marionnettes du Monde...*, (Commission du Folklore de la Saison Liégeoise, 1958), pp. 232-244.

to Rumania, Bulgaria and Jugoslavia, so it was introduced into Greece where it exists as a relic of Turkish domination. It is ironical then that the subject of its origins should be used currently as a means of furthering up glorification of Greek nationalism and promoting the fermentation of stirring up anti-Turkish feeling.

The shadow theatre in Greece is completely Turkish in essence. The Greeks have simply adapted the Turkish visual-oral tradition to their own ends. While plots used by the Greek shadow puppeteers have a Greek locale, they are merely copies of well-tryed Turkish ones. These the Greeks have either taken singly or joined together as a sort of amalgam. They have changed Karagöz into Karaghiozis. He appears with a bald head, a hooked nose and a hump-back, showing otherwise several Turkish traits.

Hacivat appears in the Greek plays as Hatziavatis, while the Greek Evraios corresponds to the Turkish Jew. Bebe Ruhi has his parallel in the Greek dwarf, Morfonios, and Baba Himmet has two Greek forms. These are O Psilos and Barba Yiorgo. This latter Greek character shares certain traits with Matiz. However, Matiz has a fuller counterpart in Veligeka or Der-venegas, who is an Albanian. Çelebi corresponds to three different Greek characters: Aggelos, Bey and Young Turkish Officer. Frenk, the character in the Turkish play, appears in the Greek as Sior Nionios (Dionysios) and also lends a few traits to Aggelos too. It is not only in the stock characters of the plays that the Greek shadow theatre lifts ideas from Karagöz but also in the regions of plotting, formula scenes, visual sequences, and technical and verbal devices.

An English friend, Mario Rinvoluti, after translating and publishing in English the well-known Greek puppet master, Sotiris Spatharis' memoirs,²⁵ collected Greek shadow puppets on location in Greece. He took coloured slides of visual scenes and interviewed the Greek puppet masters on tape, recording them live during actual performances. He shot forty minutes of film during a regular performance. He further managed to collect fifty-four reels of tape on which actual plays can be heard. Of some four reels of sound-track film, one reel is of Karaghiosis' stock character songs. He also got four reels of 'dead' plays, that is of plays not recorded during a live performance. A further six reels contain the life stories of the puppeteer's professional career. All in all, he took 204 color slides of the Greek shadow theatre. After evaluating his findings based on his research, he wrote an essay which is, as yet, unpublished. The title of this is: "Notes towards a comparison between Ritter's Turkish Shadow Plays collected in 1918 and the Harvard Greek Shadow Plays collected in 1969".

²⁵ Sotiris Spatharis, *Behind the white screen* (London, 1967).

²⁶ Metin And, "Yunanlılar Bizim Karagöze Nasıl Sahip Çıktılar?", *Türkiyemiz* 5 (October, 1971) [includes an English summary].



A Jugoslavian figure depicting a trunk.



A shadow puppet from Aleppo.



Hacivat (Hacivat)

Karagöz

Tunisian Figures.



Karaghiozis



Hatzivaotis

He has kindly lent me these notes and given me permission to summarise his findings in an article.²⁶ Extracts from this appear below. It is by virtue of this excellent piece of research that we can safely conclude beyond all shadow of doubt that the adaptation of Greek shadow theatre from the Turkish, and the correspondence of the former to the latter, goes beyond a mere borrowing of technique and includes stock characters, plots and every type of comic device necessary to give the Greek version its identity, borrowed as it is from the Turkish in every respect.

Yet the Greeks have taken every opportunity in the case of the origins of shadow theatre, to disseminate anti-Turkish propaganda as a means of arousing world opinion against the Turk. By feigning ignorance of well-known facts and widely-held academic opinion, they lay claim of ownership to Turkish Shadow Theatre in much the same way as they lay claim to other things which are a purely Turkish legacy.

For instance, the theme of the 1970 calendar or *Pirelli-Hellas* took up the story of the Greek Karaghiosis and included a long article called "The First Origins of the Modern Greek Shadow Theatre" written by I.T. Pamboukis, Librarian in Chief of the Athens Academy. This work took every opportunity to attack and debase Turkey. Though he accepts the fact that the first appearances of shadow theatre in Greece remain uncertain, he proceeds to quote another Greek writer's opinion. This quotation reads:

"The Turks, generally speaking, invented nothing for themselves but stole other people's ideas whenever they could find them. A warlike nation, their eyes firmly fixed on the future, they had no leisure for the development of arts and crafts".

He supports this statement by saying that Turks are a nomadic people without any true folk culture. Paradoxically, he accepts on the other hand in Greece under Turkish domination, the unifying culture was Turkish and that countless Turkish loan words spring up daily in Greek speech.

Rinvoluti's interviews with the Greek puppet masters state clearly in every case that they believe Karagöz to have originated in Turkey and to have been imported from thence into Greece.²⁷

In 1952, Kostas I. Biris brought out a work entitled *O Karaghiosis-Elleniko laiko Theatro* (Athens, 1952). A summarised version of it appeared in the July-August 1963, *Theatro* (no. 11 issue, pages 9-19). It was devoted to Greek shadow theatre.

²⁷ Few years back a postgraduate student wrote me letter for help in preparing his thesis on Greek shadow theatre; a doctoral dissertation to be presented in Vienna University. We have corresponded for nearly two years. Eventually he finished his thesis which has been submitted, and has earned for him his degree. See Walter Puchner, *Das Neugriechische Schattentheater Karagiosis* (Wien, 1972) This unpublished dissertation deserves to be published. It is a thorough piece of scholarship and is not biased or prejudiced like the other Greek works on the subject.

Biris' material has been in circulation for some twenty five years and, as he was the first person to have attempted to construct a history of Greek shadow theatre, it is worth pointing out how he has given so much of his time to expression of his anti-Turkish feelings. It is in regard to this that Rinvolucri's unpublished essay will now be quoted in part, in the hope that some of Biris' contradictions and errors can be cleared up. Among the points Rinvolucri's mentions are the following:

"Biris is a typical product of the nationalistic brain-washing Greek primary and secondary school children are put through. He has come out of the wash violently nationalistic and equally violently anti-Turkish. For example, he constructs Greek etymologies for the name Karagöz and Hacivat and goes on to assert that these derivations 'prove' that the 17th century Ottoman shadow theatre is clearly a Greek creation, which the Turkish shadow players of the Sultan took from the Greeks [p. 9]. How can he honestly believe evidence as flimsy as this? The seventeenth century travel writer and diarist, Evliya Çelebi, suggested that Karagöz might have gypsy antecedents. There are suggestions of this both in his dress and parts of the oral tradition. But paranoically Biris sees it this way: "As we have said, through all his travels, Evliya shows himself to be a fanatical Muslim who hates the Greeks to the point of passing over in silence anything of theirs that he himself sees and likes. "Could Biris be repeating Evliya's mistakes, the other way round?"

"I doubt if Biris really fully understands the workings of a visual-oral tradition: the way it moves sinuously and intricately and the way, whatever changes' are going on, it consciously clings to the past. He talks about this or that puppeteer 'creating' a new puppet, while in fact the foregoing pages show that even so specifically Greek a puppet as Barba Yiorgo has a long history in the Ottoman tradition through Baba Himmet and Matiz. Unless one manages to free one's mind from preconceptions based on the way the written language works, it is very hard to even begin studying a visual oral tradition. I doubt if Biris has been through this liberative process".

"One of Biris's major sources of information in building up his picture of the developments of Greek shadow theatre were old puppeteers. He tells us on page 22 of his work that this information 'has great value'. I would agree but only on condition that every scrap of information has been independently ascertained from two or more independent sources. On questions of information, a more creatively distortive group of men than the shadow masters of Greece would be hard to find. An example of the need for cross-checking is the business of the hinged rod. Biris, presumably quoting and old puppeteer, says Yiannakouras brought it from America in 1918; Spatharis, now in or nearing his



Greek shadow puppets.



A back screen view of a Greek shadow theatre.

eighties, says Kellarinopoulos invented the hinge. Here we have two equal authorities contradicting each other. Without a third and fourth opinion one remains at an impasse. In fact in this particular case we know that the hinged rod was a known accessory, if a minor one, in the Turkish part of the tradition. [fig. 55] Biris, it seems to me, has tried to write history from sources which, unless rigorously cross-checked are far from historical. There is no evidence in the book of any such cross-checking.

"Biris befores the issue of the transition of the Ottoman visual-oral tradition from Turkish into Greek by concentrating our attention too exclusively on developments in that tiny part of the Greek speaking world that got its shaky independence in 1829. Is it likely that the linguistic and other transitions occurred in the backward, provincial, swollen willages of Roumeli and the peleonese, like Nauplion, Plaka (that's what Athens was) and Patras, rather than in the great centres of the Ottoman Empire with their large Greek speaking populations, like Izmir, Sefanik and Istanbul? I have no evidence concerning this matter-I just pose the question".

"Through ignorance of the Turkish tradition, Biris concludes that the Greek tradition has pretty well made a clean sweep and that what he calls 'hellenisation' has made Karagiosis a radically different theatre to Karagöz. He talks about the Greek puppeteers working to 'clean' the tradition of barbarous foreign elements and give it the definite Greek form in which we younger Greeks know Karagiosis. What, the foregoing pages try to show is that the Turkish and Greek theatre are so closely connected as to be really different parts of a continuous visual oral tradition. Enough has been said to indicate that Biris's book needs to be read with great care and circumspection. There are a lot of useful things in it, but these are scrambled together with various ignorances and peppered with wild chauvinism. The overall result is a seriously distorted picture".

Aftermath: The Decline and Later Influence of Karagöz

The introduction of Western culture and the emergence of the European drama as a preferred form in the 19th century, succeeded in destroying both traditional folk and popular art, even though the people found no compulsion within themselves to promote a natural preference for western arts. Later, the advent of cinema, followed by radio and, very recently, television, has broken all ties between the people and traditional arts, destroying every form of folklore and ethnic culture and transforming the very concept of the society. Accordingly, shadow theatre belongs

to a dead past, which has faced the same fate. Of course, there are other reasons for the decline and eventually wiping out of shadow theatre.

One of these was that since the time of Abdülaziz time, who was succeeded to the throne by Abdülhamit II, this latter reigning 33 years. Turkey was ruled by despotism which killed the most vital element of the shadow theatre and *Ortaoyunu*. This was its use as a vehicle by which the people could perpetrate social and political satire. Karagöz had been the traditional symbol of the "little man", the spokesman of the people embodying a fundamental view of society.

Also conservatism among the puppet-men deadened the old plays since they would not allow the introduction of anything new. The old show men eventually died out; the last exponent of Karagöz, Küçük Ali, dying in 1974. There were not many new comers to the profession as it demanded a long term of apprenticeship, which, together with the conservatism of the form did not appeal to today's modern men, products of the changed conditions. The result was that puppet-men gradually disappeared.

Yet, in the 19th century, there were two attempts at restoring the Karagöz and *Ortaoyunu*. Some puppet men like Kâtip Salih introduced a few innovations in the shadow technique, to make Karagöz performances more relevant. They expanded its content to include contemporary references, they borrowed new scenarios and added new characters. In addition to this, as we have already seen in the Introduction, *Tulûat* Theatre (The Improvised Theatre) introduced a new element into Turkish traditional theatre-the proscenium stage, the set consisting of painted drop, wings and borders. Topicalized situations were borrowed from some plays in the repertoire of the western theatres and changed to suit the particular style of the traditional theatre with its extempore acting.

But apart from such minor and superficial changes, the possibility for innovation in Turkish traditional theatre is limited, since it relies heavily on its vital relationship with the social structure of the Empire, at the time of its decline; with which its stories, characters, and underlying philosophy are inextricably involved. Therefore these attempts to refurbish it failed to keep pace, either in content or in style, with changes in public taste.

That is the negative side of the question. On the positive side, it must be said that attempts to restore Karagöz have been pursued up to the present time. One is a scheme to preserve as a museum piece whatever is left at the present of the shadow theatre. Another attempt is in using Karagöz stories and characters to be acted on stage by live actors. The first attempts in this field were achieved at the beginning of this century, when some musical comedies were composed, using actors, attired as Karagöz figures to play out in speech and posture an imitation of shadow theatre figures. The well-known Turkish popular

A popular actor, Naşit Özcan, dressed as Karagöz.



A scene from the play Karagöz at the Thalia Theatre in Budapest. (Adapted and directed by Kazimir Karoly.)



comedian, Naşit Özcan, appeared disguised as Karagöz on the stage. More recently, the Turkish State Ballet, which is purely a classical ballet company, staged a Turkish ballet based on Turkish composer, Ferit Tüzün's music. It was called *Çeşmebaşı* ('At the Fountainhead') and was choreographed by the well-known choreographer, Dame Ninette de Valois. As founder of Turkish State Ballet, she attempted to give her impressions of Turkish folklore by adding a short sequence on Karagöz and Hacivat, where these two popular character tried to project the antic postures and movements of the shadow figures to the rhythm of the music, capturing the very essence of their style in terms of movement. In the same vein, a leading Turkish newspaper, *Milliyet*, opened a competition for new Karagöz texts in 1968, in which each participant was expected to contribute three scenarios. The jury gave the first prize to the internationally-known humourist and playwright, Aziz Nesin. Two of his scenarios were staged by an Istanbul theatre, in which the actors were attired in Karagöz character costumes.

Another interesting attempt was made in Hungary. The artistic director of Thalia Theater, one of the leading repertory theatres in Budapest, Karoly Kazimir, after paying a visit to Turkey in 1973, adapted a scenario entitled *Karagöz*. This was staged in 1973, and ever since its has been played periodically with tremendous success. The play starts with a prologue where internationally-known popular heroes from many countries, such as Petrushka, Grand Guignol, Dr. Faustus, Kasperl, Pulcinella, Nasreddin Hoca, and others, are introduced. The main action of the play centres on the famous Karagöz play, *Ferhad and Şirin*. This basic story has been embellished by additional fragments from other texts such as *The Public Scribe* and *The Madhouse*. Throughout this entertainment the actors are disguised as Karagöz figures.

Since their first contact with the West, artists and the general public have felt within themselves a war between the traditional and the modern. Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, believed that it was possible to blend native tradition and western modernism harmoniously. However he formulated his ideas on the arts only in the case of music. About this, he said the aim would be to wed the essentially timeless Turkish folk music to occidental music techniques.

Since the 1960's, through the efforts of the present writer and his colleagues articles have been written drawing certain analogies between Turkish traditional popular theatre and western avant-garde theatres. Playwrights and theatre people have remarked with astonishment that many contemporary European playwrights and artists, from Brecht to Ionesco, and from Matisse to Klee, have used similar methods to Turkish traditional theatre in particular, and Turkish arts in general. So modern trends have been facilitated by the fact that the

acts and modes of Turkish traditional artistic creations were already in their essence unconsciously fairly modern.

Let's examine some of the striking resemblances between western theatre forms and Karagöz plus other genres of Turkish traditional theatre:

(1) Karagöz is not plotted in the Aristotelian sense. Instead it uses a loose, episodic structure in which disconnected, fragmentary scenes woven together do not require the compulsive attention of the audience. Both Karagöz and contemporary theatre is attracted to anti-form or open form, a flexible form whose chief function is to keep on dissolving and renewing itself, and, instead of being confined to show ease in openness. Every plot and every episode is subject to expansion, contraction, or change in order of presentation, decided on by an intuitive arrangement between the screen and the audience. It requires the participation of both parties.

(2) Abstraction or 'pure theatre', in which style contemporary theatre show signs of increasing rather than diminishing, shares features with Karagöz. It is a theatre without will, without identity, without specific concepts of time and place, without psychology, without causality, and where dialogues are made by just stringing words together with no care as to their meaning or logical order. Like the absurd theatre, Karagöz uses empty phrases to establish the failure of communication between various people. No one seems to hear or understand anyone else. The dialogue has no bearing on the dramatic progress, while the dramatic conflict is achieved by this apparent eagerness to communicate without any success, leading to frustration or to a mounting exasperation.

(3) In both types of theatre, there is an inclination towards total theatre, where story, music, dance, poetry, clowning and juggling are integral parts of the show.

(4) One of the most striking characteristics of Turkish traditional theatre, is the high degree of specialization in presentational form, as opposes to the representational or illusionistic theatre, which is a form that the contemporary western artist tends to see himself as being part of.

(5) Improvisation is another important characteristic of Turkish traditional theatre. The contemporary artist or playwright endeavours to give an impression of improvisation in the performance, or of intuitive spontaneity.

So after 1960, Turkish playwrights, artists and art historians, including the present writer, realized that the contemporary playwright had merely reinvented methods previously used in Turkish traditional theatre. In every traditional form of the arts there is an essentially Turkish form springing from the public taste, that people themselves have fashioned through centuries. In practice, these ethnocentric ideas have been approached by some playwrights in three different ways, which are also valid for the other arts.



A Karagöz sequence from the ballet Çeşmebaşı. (Choreography by Dame Ninette de Valois and music by Ferit Tüzün.)

One approach is to take an existing traditional form and modernize it, fashioning abstract patterns by covering them with other flesh and sustaining them with the current ideas. This superficial approach has been exemplified already in describing the attempts to do a Karagöz show using live actors. One may also mention here Sadık Şendil's *Kanlı Nigâr* (The Bloody Nigâr), Refik Erduran's *Ayı Masalı* (Bear Tale), Oktay Rifat's *Oyun İçinde Oyun* (Play within a Play), and Erol Toy's *Meddah* (The Story Teller) among many others. The great temptation to be content with superficial commercial successes caused their work to degenerate into a parade of adolescent pranks and frequent naivety when they hit on current political and social problems. Yet in the case of the second category of writers, the contribution of traditional Turkish theatre far transcends the mere borrowing of a fixed type, scenario or form. For them, the traditional theatre can offer us a rich repertory of techniques, not merely for imitation but for re-creation. It rests on the basic conceptions, which are the essence of traditional Turkish theatre. According to these writers, traditional theatre is not the gathering of superficial plots, but rather a sense of theatre that can provide a fund of stage conventions and techniques, a sense of anti-illusionistic rapport between the actors and the audience, an open or flexible form, the attempt to give an impression of improvisation and total theatre in performance together with the use of music, dance and songs as in the traditional Turkish theatre. Examples of this approach are seen in the plays of Haldun Taner, Sermet Çağan, Sabahattin Kudret Aksal, Ahmet Kutsi Tecer, Turgut Özakman and Cahit Atay.

Another example where this approach has been seen to be appropriate is in improvisational, topical revue, called cabaret theatre. As we have already seen, one of the strongest points in Karagöz was political and social satire. So in İstanbul, Haldun Taner's company, the *Devekuşu Kabare Tiyatrosu* (Ostrich Cabaret Theatre) presents plays in this form, satirizing contemporary Turkish life. Its barbs are aimed at everything, from the political situation to space flight to the moon. Performances are attended by a willing audience, which delights in seeing the balloons of pretense punctured, or the high and mighty levelled to the common plane. Public figures and public organizations are openly ridiculed as a sort of social safety valve, relieving the spectator of his outrage and frustration at the forces which manipulate his fate.

A third possible approach would be a search for the spirit, not only within the forms and conventions of Turkish traditional theatre, but with a broader concept of the intrinsic and artistic values of all traditional Turkish arts and literature. In this respect, Karagöz is a unique source for it is a synthesis and amalgamation of traditional arts. Of course this would depend largely on individual talents. However when the process of assimilation is complete, Turkey will be able to stamp its own genius on this dramatic art form.



86. Sultan Ahmet III watching a pyrotechnic display taking place on a raft bearing giant puppets (18th Century).



87. A giant puppet, having on his head four smaller puppets, while the giant one was moving forward the smaller puppets danced in their places (18th Century).



88. Rod puppets presented in a carriage, where the manipulators were concealed underneath the puppets. This carriage is surrounded by various masked jesters and a mechanical ostrich (18th Century).



89. A portable puppet booth in 16th Century.



90. Three Sisters.



91. A string puppet (Servant)



92. Ibis



93. A hand puppet-a string puppet



94. Negro (arabi)



95. A clown (maskara)



96. Two glove puppets, at Melden village in Western Anatolia.



97. Young girl.



98. Two hand puppets in a carriage (From Çankırı, Central Anatolia).

APPENDIX
on
The Turkish Puppet and Marionette Theatre

While the Turkish shadow theatre called Karagöz has been known world-wide for centuries and long identified with Turkey, the existence of Turkish puppetry which was a long-standing established tradition with the Turks before they came to know shadow theatre in the 16th century is comparatively little known.

Since Karagöz dealt with on the previous pages, in this appendix for the second edition, I shall endeavour to introduce Turkish puppetry enjoyed under various forms, a subject hitherto unexplored. Turks had a long tradition of representational arts from pre-Islamic times and among them the instinct and gift for representational arts were so deeply implanted that it was indulged in in spite of clerical disapproval; there was a wide range of figural representation, some employing unusual and elsewhere unexploited media, such as expendable art objects made in the shape of animals or human beings of candy sugar. These were all round objects, some of which were small enough to be carried by one person, while others were of a size which required them to be carried by four people or transported on wheeled carts. In a recent book¹, the present author enumerated, apart from book illustration and miniature painting, ten different categories of figural representation among Turks including various forms of puppetry.

Another reason why the existence of puppetry has been ignored by researchers is the ambiguity of old texts and the confusion over the word 'puppet' and the use of the Arabic word *hayal* in Turkish. This word *hayal* literally means 'fancy, imagination, mirror'; but theatrically speaking it means nothing more than imitation or mimicry, plays or acting based on imitation. It is a general term, such as *wayang*, used for many forms

¹ Metin And, *Turkish Miniature Painting. The Ottoman Period* (Second revised edition), Ankara 1978, pp. 14-22.



of performing arts. It has been employed both for the shadow and the puppet play. Some however, took it to mean only shadow theatre.

The Turkish word for puppet is *kukla*; however, it makes its appearance only from the 17th century onward, before that there were many words used for various puppet forms, as we shall see later. The etymology of the word *kukla* is obscure. We find it in Greek meaning 'doll', in Chinese it exists as *k'uei-lei* for puppet plays, occurring in the year 633 A.D. The pronunciation of the word in T'ang times should have been *kukle*, Japanese *kugutsu* again means puppet play. The etymology of the Japanese *kugutsu* from the Korean *Kihok-tuk* has been established by some scholars. And the Russian *kukla* is probably more ancient. There is also the possibility that the word comes from the Gypsy language, in which a puppet is *kuki* or *kukli*, and the gypsies may have introduced the word as well as the puppet play from India to Turkey and the Balkan countries. There is also the Central Asian Turkish word *kugurcuk* or *kavurcak* (occurring in several phonetic variants). The use of *kukla* in Turkey, - as I have already pointed out, - is more recent, dating back to the 17th century among the Central Asian Turks who are supposed to have introduced the word to China, or vice versa, but more likely the former possibility as both *k'uei-lei* and *kuo-t'u* are likely to be of foreign origin. As we shall see later, among Central Asian Turks two words for dolls and puppets are *kavurcak* and *korcak*, which are still in use in some parts of rural Anatolian Turkey.²

There are two possible lines of influences for Turkish puppetry. One is Asian, the other more recent is the Western. The Asian one is more important, since the Turks came from Central Asia and settled in Anatolia. Today Central Asia is inhabited by various Turcic nations. It was from the pre-Islamic Central Asian and Ural-Altaic Turcic cultures that the Turkish nation derived its origin. The people of those cultures were Manichean and Buddhist and practised animism and shamanism. Even before their conversion to Islam they possessed a fairly high level of civilization. Among Central Asian Turks puppets were used for magic purposes as well as for entertainment. For both functions we find many remnants of the use of puppetry in Anatolian Turkey, the origin of which is

2 For discussion on *kukla* and *kavurcak* see, Alessio Bombaci, "On Ancient Turkish Dramatic Performances", *Aspects of Altaic Civilization* (ed. Denis Sinor), vol. 23 (1963), pp. 94-103.

traceable to Central Asia. As to the magical use of puppets, Central Asian shamans, whose chief activities are concerned with assisting the soul of the dead in the other world, are aided in their ceremonies by spirits who are represented by small, roughly carved idols. Many ethnographical museums possess such figures, different from one another. In Eastern Turkestan shamans, especially in order to remove malaria, use a healing doll called *kugurcak* or *korcak* made of rags. After the shaman has charmed the disease into these healing dolls, it is believed the illness is carried away with the doll. Also among Central Asian Turks the images of deceased relatives, which constitute objects of veneration and adoration, are also called *kugurcak*: after making a doll of the deceased, the members of the family kiss it, they fondle it, they rub it on their face, they set the first mouthful of their meals before these dolls which represent the dead member of the family.

The Central Asian calls these idols or fetishes *Tös* and the Moghul and Tungus *Ongon*. They are chiefly human figures but they also represent birds or other animals. These latter are called *Tuba* or *Eren* and among Yakut Turks *Tangara* or *Emeget*. They are made of rags, felt and the bark of the beech tree. Some are made of hides of fox, rabbit and other animals. Among Turkish *Tös* more animals such as rabbit, bear, eagle and squirrel are represented. The Uranha tribes had temples where walls were carved into small cells where various of these *Tös* made of wood representing ravens, cuckoos, oxen and stallions were displayed.

Today we find many remnants of the magic use of puppets in rural Anatolia, traceable back to Central Asian practices. The more widespread practice is 'rain-dolly', a magic practice for the purpose of calling down rain as necessity arises. This is usually a rough, primitive doll, usually made by taking two sticks in the form of a cross, and with the addition of some old clothes and a cap, representing a female, and it is usually called 'the bride'. Their names vary according to the regions: *Bebek* (doll), *çaput adam* (Rag man), *Kepçe kadın* (ladle woman), *çömçe gelin* (ladle bride), *kepçecik* (tiny ladle), *Bodi Bostan*, *Gelin Gök*, *Kepçe başı* (head of ladle) *Su Gelini* (Water Bride), *Kodu Gelin* and others. Although the practice varies from village to village, in general it is observed by children who make a rough doll or effigy which they sprinkle with water. Then this figure is carried round the village, and the people throw water on it from the roofs of the houses. They sing app-



Central Asian glove puppets
(*kol korçak*)



Central Asian marionettes
(*çadır hayal*)



Central Asian glove puppet.



Central Asian "flying puppeteer"

ropriate songs or rhymes as they visit each house. The household of each house they visit splash water on the effigy and the children are given food.

Among Central Asian Turks, besides puppetry for magic purposes we find a long-standing established puppet tradition. In Turkestan the general puppetry is called *Korçak Oyunu*. There are two kinds of puppetry: (1) *Çadır-i hayal* (or *çadır hayal*): literally meaning 'tent puppet' is a string puppet or marionette where 18 puppets can be manipulated simultaneously. For the sake of illusion the plays are performed at night or in the dark to conceal the strings; (2) *Dest Korçak* or *Kol Korçak* is hand or glove puppet where naturally only two puppets can be manipulated simultaneously. The second kind in Turkestan is also called 'flying puppeteer' a form performed by an itinerant puppeteer. The puppeteer carries a large curtain which is held up by a screen stretched between two upright poles and which hangs down to his knees, thus concealing the puppeteer and serving as a back cloth to the puppets. This is called *kol çadır* or *dest çadır*. Only the puppeteer's legs and feet below his knees are visible. The lower half of this curtain has a wide and deep pocket. The puppeteer's hands are screened inside the pocket, which serves as a puppet stage. The puppeteer carries his puppets inside this pocket like a kangaroo carrying her young in her pouch, and is ready to perform anywhere under any conditions. Adam Olearius, a traveller of the 17th century, witnessed this kind in Russia, and in Iran as well.³

The marionette booth has been described in an article on Central Asian theatre⁴: According to this, the booth has four sides, without a curtain. It is 1 1/2 meter long, a meter high and one meter wide. Altogether the booth is less high than an average sized man. Before Russian occupation the puppets were made of wood and ornamented. Later, they were made with more artistry, painted and laquered, and with hair and beards, also the content of the plays changed.

Personally, I have never had a chance of watching any performance of either kind, yet in 1962 when I made a trip to the Soviet Union I had a chance of examining them in the Leningrad Ethnographical Museum which contains the largest

3 Adam Olearius, *Vermehrten Moscovitischen und Persianischen Reisebeschreibung*, Schleswig 1656, p. 193 and p. 437.

4 Fr. Dukmeyer, "Kurzer Bericht über das Theaterwesen in Mittelasien", *Deutsche Dramaturgie* (Leipzig) 1894/95, I, pp. 316-18.

collection of these puppets. Similarly, the Puppet Museum in Moscow has some specimens including the self-contained booth of the 'flying puppeteer'.

The best study on these both puppet forms is in Russian by Gavrilov.⁵ The study contains two water- colour plates representing two main characters Pehleven Keçel and Biçe Hanum-oim and several other black and white pictures of 'flying puppetry' or 'bag-scene' puppetry. He also gives a Russian translation of two plays of both kinds. The first text called *Serkerdeler* (The Government Officials) is for marionettes and was recorded in 1926 in a Toi-tepe village. In this play a high official of Czarist Russia called Jasaul is ridiculed together with a Christian drunkard with bad manners. This kind of marionette also derives its characters and stories from historical events, from different professions and nationalities, and some characters from legends and tales, and animal characters are introduced. As to the other kind, the Gavrilov study gives also a text in Russian translation called *Pehlevan Keçel*, which is the name of of the Persian glove puppet and also the name of the play's main character-in Persian, *Kachal Pahlavan*. This chief character with its prominent nose is considered very funny and grotesque by Turkestan people since Turkestani have flat or straight noses. And the wife or sweetheart of Pehlevan Keçel is called Biçe Hanum-oim, Puçak hanum, or Fucya hanum among others. Also love themes, types 'and themes from Russian bureaucracy, and a European doctor, are favorite themes of this theatre. Owing to their improvisatory and flexible character, both kinds vary from performance to performance according to audience reaction. Music plays an important role. The performance starts with the sound of the *karnai* which is a long brass instrument sounding like a horn, also an orchestra consisting of drums, tambourins, clappers and *Zurna* (an oboe-like instrument). The puppeteers as well as the musicians for the puppet shows used to belong to one or two guilds formed by performing folk artists. During the Soviet regime, with the advent of the cinema and Western theatre, people in towns lost interest in these traditional puppet shows, they fell into disrepute, and only remained in remote villages and on the steppes.

We come to know the existence of one more puppet-like form from a travel book⁶ on Turkestan among the Sarts (these are a distinct Turkish speaking ethnic group, mostly nomadic

5 M. F. Gavrilov, *Kukol-nyj teatr v Uzbekistane*, Tachkent 1928.

6 A.M.B. Meakin, *In Russian Turkestan*, London 1903, p. 219.



Persian marionettes
(*khayma shah bazi*)



*Egyptian 19th century
puppets.*

people): "The next item was a wrestling match between a Sart and a stick which had been dressed up in a turban and calat. The Sart cleverly put his own arm into the doll's sleeve and clutched at his own neck. The doll was then seen to pick up a tambourine from the floor and hit his opponent violently on the head. The two soon rolled on the floor together, struggling desperately. The stick, defeated at least, was taken out of its clothes and handed amongst the spectators." We find exactly the same form of presentation in rural Anatolian Turkey under the name of *Aptal Oyunu* (The Play of the Idiot) where the puppet on a stick is called Aptal, and they wrestle exactly the same way as in the Sarts' play.⁷

We find both kinds of puppetry of Turkestan also among Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kirghiz and Bashkir. It is a matter of speculation in which area puppetry originated in Turkestan. To some other researchers, it might have come from India, and to some from Iran. We can conjecture also that it originated in Central Asia, influencing both Iran and China. In Iran we find exactly the same two kinds of puppetry. The marionette designated as *khayma shab bazi* (Night tent or booth play) or *shab bazi* (night play) which is like the *çadır hayal* of Central Asia with the platform at ground level. The number of puppets are as many as sixty or eighty. The reason for its being performed in evening hours and artificial light is that the strings that control the puppets are then less visible to the spectators. There is a small orchestra consisting of a drum, a fiddle and a clapper player. The other kind, the glove puppet theatre, is called *Kachal pahlavan*, taking its name from its main character where *pahlavan* means hero, artist or athlete and *kachal* means bald-headed, scabrous one or scurfy head. Because this character shows much resemblance to Karagöz especially with his bald head, often historians of Persian theatre have thought Iran knew the shadow play. Some casual allusions in some poetry, made them think that shadow theatre existed in Iran, which was not the case. In Iran the general term for puppeteer is *lobetbaz*. Both kinds are operated by two people, one stands outside the booth and takes part in the dialogue or directly in the action with the puppets, and his assistant inside the booth manipulates the puppets and speaks for each puppet's part. The puppets which are called *surat* are made by the puppeteer. The head and neck are made of wood or papier

⁷ Metin And, *Dionisos ve Anadolu Köylüsü*, İstanbul 1962, pp. 72-73.

maché. The man in the booth sometimes speaks the parts directly and sometimes through a small wind instrument called *sutak* held between his lips. This we find in Turkish Karagöz called *Nareke*, in Egyptian puppetry (*Aragoz*) *zummarā*⁸ and in Spanish puppetry *pito*⁹ (a wood, ivory tortoise-shell or silver instrument placed on the tongue which produces the strident squeaky tones). The latter is very important since when we deal with the Turkish kind we shall see some Turkish puppeteers were Jewish who emigrated from Spain in the 16th Century so they might have brought this tradition.

A Russian researcher has published two papers each studying one kind of Persian puppetry in which there is an integral text of Persian original and Russian translation for both kinds, also photos of both.¹⁰ Here just to illustrate the Persian *Kachal Pahlavan*, we can give one synopsis of a play to have an idea: "There is a favourite piece in which Pahlavan Kachal betakes himself under the guise of a most pious Muslim to the house of a certain Akhund, or rector of a parish. He sighs, weeps, groans, prays, recites verses from the Kuran or elsewhere, and quotes scraps of morality after the most approved fashion. The Akhund, delighted with his visitor, and edified by his religious zeal, begins to imitate and to emulate him. Pahlavan Kachal displays his theological knowledge, his acquaintance with the traditions and the *patristics* of Islam, and recites legends in favour of the virtue of giving alms. Voluntary charity meets his highest panegyric. He quotes many lines of the mystic poetry so dear to the Persian heart, the poetry which, under the profane semblance of love and wine, celebrates the activity and wisdom of Allah the all merciful. Then Pahlavan begins to describe the delights reserved for the charitable in Paradise. Far indeed is he from saying with Chaucer in the 'Knight's Tale', that as he never was there he can say nothing about it. On the contrary, he speaks as an eye-witness. He sings of heaven and its houris with the graces of antelopes, of its splendid banquets and its sparkling wine. The Akhund is in ecstasies. He tastes already those rivers of oil which never grow sour, and those seas of clarified honey which never

⁸ Curt Prüfer, "Drama: Arabic," *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, IV, p. 875.

⁹ J.B. Varey, *Minor Dramatic Forms in Spain with Special References to Puppets* (Ph. D. thesis) Cambridge 1950, II, p. 97. In Italy it is called *fischio* or *pivetta*, in France it is *sifflet-pratique*.

¹⁰ R.A. Galunov, "Pahlavan Kaçal-Persidskij teatr Petruski", *Iran*, II (1928), pp. 25-75 and "Heime şab bazi-Persidskij teatr marionetok", *Iran*, III (1929), pp. 1-50.

become dry. He reposes already under the perpetual shade, on couches whose linings are of thick silk interwoven with gold. He gathers fruits from gardens of plum-tree and pomegranates. He sees damsels advancing to meet him, with complexions like rubies and pearls, beauteous damsels with eloquent deep black eyes. He dances with delight, thereby demonstrating-as evolutionists tell us-his descent from the ape, he gives Pahlavan, that second Iago, his purse, bids him buy a banquet, and produces Khullari, the most excellent wine of Shiraz, which by some strange chance is found in a corner of his room, hidden away with a guitar. The two drink and play, until at last the pious Akhund becomes drunk, and drops him Kuran and his rosary. And so on. The piece of course may be extended at pleasure. It is a vivid and never ill-timed representation of the *Tartuffe* of the religion of Islam.¹¹

From surviving evidence it does seem likely that these two kinds of puppetry might have been introduced to Iran by Turks of Central Asia and not the other way round as some people think. The Persian poet Farid al-Din 'Attar (1120-1230) in his composition *Ushturnamah* (The Book of the Camel)¹² presents a Turkish puppet master (*ustad-i Turk*), he had no equal in his art and executed manifold plays with his puppets and employed seven curtains of various colours and designs, and he always performed singly. Whenever a puppet was worn out, he made and used another. All the puppets were painted in various colors, he painted every one in a different manner. He made seven curtains for his work, all many colored and full of pictures. The Turkish puppet master in the poem is the main character. Symbolically the puppet master is God (the seven curtains are the seven skies). According to some scholars the fact that the puppet master is of Turkish origin does not necessarily mean that puppetry was introduced to Persia by Turks, because Turks in Persian mystical poetry are considered as cruel and unfaithful persons, and cruelty and unfaithfulness are among the attributes of the Islamic God emphasized by Sufis, of whom the poet Attar was one.¹³ In the poem we have two terms that strike our attention. One of whom is *perdadari* as the puppet master is called, and the other *surat* meaning puppet.

11 James Mew, "The Modern Persian Stage", *The Fortnightly Review*, LIX, 8 (January-June) 1896, pp. 905-106.

12 See H. Ritter, "Attar" in *Encyclopedie de l'Islam*, 2nd edition; *Ushturnamah* is edited by Mahdi Mhakkik (Tehran 1962).

13 For the symbolic meaning of the poem see, H. Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, Leiden 1955, p. 42.

Perdadari is a Persian term designating the dramatic story-tellers who narrate their stories in front of a painted backcloth which represents the main images of the story in composite composition. But as we have already pointed out, in both forms of Persian puppetry the main puppet master stands outside the puppet booth, like a *perdadari* standing in front of the painted backcloth.

It is interesting to note that the Persian poet Nizami's *Husrav u Shirin* gives a description of a puppet performance where the word used for puppet is *lu'betbaz-i gerdun* and the Turkish rendering of this work in 1340 by the Turkish poet Kutb uses the Turkish word for puppet *kavurcak* for *lubetbaz*.¹⁴

A detailed account of Persian puppetry can be found in a work by the fifteenth-century Persian moralist Husain Va'iz Kashifi in his *Futuvvet-name-i Sultani*,¹⁵ in which there are two puppets, one a woman, the other a man, and the puppeteer is hidden in a tent, and speaks their voices alternately as a woman's and a man's voice. He also makes the distinction between the two kinds in Persian puppetry.

Apart from these two main kinds in Persia there are other lesser known minor puppet forms under the names *Humbazi* and *Arusek*.¹⁶ Also some giant-size effigies, some of which were used in *Taziye* (Persian passion play) performances.

In the puppet museum of Obratsov's puppet theatre in Moscow six of these effigies are displayed. Also connected to *Taziye* tradition there is a religious farce directed against the second caliph Omar (the commander of Yazid's army in Karbala was also called Omar, so it was directed against him as well). Since caliph Omar is considered by Shiite Persians a usurper of the title and a murderer, on the ninth day of the month of Rabi'u'l-avval there is a three days ceremony and rituals, in which a farce is enacted and the last final event is the burning in effigy of Omar.

Although Ottoman popular theatre tradition enjoyed a much larger variety of puppet forms, yet unlike Persian puppetry and the Turkish shadow theatre we have no idea of the characters and repertoire. Yet it seems that in Turkey puppetry may have come earlier than the other theatrical forms; and like Karagöz and Ortaoyunu (improvisatory popular comedy) with their reciprocal influences, we can assume that live plays

¹⁴ See Bombaci, pp. 98 - 99.

¹⁵ British Museum MS. Add 22.705; printed edition (ed. Muhammed Jafar Mahjub) Teheran 1341. For Russian translation see. R.A. Galunov, "Futuvvet-name-i Soltani", *Iran*, II (1928) pp. 50-52; 72-74.

¹⁶ See Medjid Rezvani, *Le Theatre et la danse en Iran*, Paris 1962.



and puppet shows had exercised a powerful influence on each other, hence probably the characters and repertoire of Turkish puppetry can be studied through the better known forms. There is a wealth of references in early texts, though the mentions are not detailed. From these references it would seem that, in one form or another, puppetry flourished and remained an important part of folk culture until the Western impact of the late 18th century. One of the major sources are the Festival Books, both in Turkish or in European languages, written by eye-witnesses to these festivals. Under the patronage of the Court, Ottoman festivals were major fosterers of arts and puppetry featured a great deal in these festivals. The Turkish books, especially those on the Festival of 1582 which lasted more than fifty days and fifty nights and the Festival of 1720 which lasted fifteen days, are illustrated by hundreds of miniatures, some depicting puppet booths or puppets themselves. There is a manuscript of the 16th century¹⁷ in Topkapı Palace in which is a list containing the names of individual players and the names of the players' companies who participated in the Festival of 1582; it has many headings which could have a connection either with shadow theatre or puppet theatre. Since these headings are mentioned in the manuscript in close sequence we have every reason to believe that they are in relation to one another: one of them is the Persian word *suratbazan* (puppet players), the other is *cemaat-i piyade çadırları*, literally meaning the company of foot travellers' tents.

This is reminiscent of Turkestan's *çadır hayal* (the tent puppets) and could be string puppets or marionettes. Also Evliya Çelebi, the great Turkish traveller of the 17th century, mentions two kinds of puppet, one being *kukla* and the other *başkukla* (head puppet). Could the second one be a different kind of puppet or does it mean the master, chief performer or chief puppeteer? We have no answer. Not to mention various terms more connected with shadow theatre such as *hayal-i hass*, *hayal-i zill*, *şebbazan* (night players), and *hayal-i tasvir-iyan*, there are two more terms which are puzzling: one is *ayak kuklası* (foot puppet) and the other *yer kuklası* (ground puppet). We can only speculate on what they implied. For the former one we guess it is a puppet form such as puppet à la planchette, where puppets are moved by manipulating the string to which puppets are tied by foot. In fact a German eye-witness' account of the Festival of 1582 might be helpful:



16th century puppet booth

¹⁷ Topkapı Palace Museum D. 100022.

"Another man brought a thing onto the square that was about an ell in height and width and was surrounded with red cloth. He set himself in front of it and pulled and pushed with his feet at it so that on top all kinds of strange figures appeared. There were among other things, little men, birds and animals, only the top half of their bodies showing, and they jumped and sprang back and forth."¹⁸ As to the latter we can speculate that 'ground puppet' could be similar to a puppet very widespread even today in rural area which we will deal with later when we examine the puppet in the folk theatre, in which the puppeteer lies down on the ground.

It is more likely according to the early references that most of Turkish puppetry was a combination of live actors with puppets. Two miniatures from the Festival Book of 1582 depicting a puppet booth like a tent have by the huts jesters and dancers. The following description by the German eyewitness could be once more our guide: "A small hut there was, in which there played, in a very fine and gay manner, small little men (puppets as one calls them), by talking and jumping about; and among other things, they also performed a whole marriage ceremony, in which there also entered some Turkish boys, who always clapped their small pieces of wood and danced; and then they joined in with the puppets and treated them as if they were alive and could see everything. Through this, they wanted to create some entertainment, and wanted to make believe that these were no puppets, but were actually alive".¹⁹ The same observer mentions also performers who made their appearance carrying puppets or having puppets slung around their necks; these performers would then give a show in which they talked with their puppets.²⁰ (Fig. 89).

One other kind we find in the festival of 1720, which is depicted by two miniatures and the accompanying text gives some information. This is something like a rod puppet, presented in a carriage where the manipulators were concealed underneath the puppets. The text describes that a gilt carriage made to look like a pavilion, inside were three large-size puppets in Persian attire and six like others dancers with clappers in their hands. The device operating the wagon was hidden inside. As the wheels turned the puppets moved and swung their arms like the hands of a clock, some playing clappers and others

¹⁸ Nicholas von Haunolth, "Particular Verzeichnuz mit was Ceremonien...", Published in Johannes Lewenklaw, *Neuwe Cronica Türkischer Nation* (Frankfurt am Mayn, 1590), p. 497.

¹⁹ Haunolth, p. 481.

²⁰ Haunolth, p. 502.

dancing. This carriage was surrounded by various masked jesters but what is worthwhile mentioning is a mechanical ostrich which moved its wings as if it were alive. (Fig. 88). In Ottoman Festivals these automata which seem to have been mechanically operated were highly developed. Some of these devices either moved by cleverly concealed operators, or perhaps by some kind of clockwork.

In Turkish source books of both earlier and later periods, a number of references are made to the important role Jews played in Turkish popular entertainment. A number of Jews emigrated to Turkey, following their expulsion from Spain and Portugal at the end of the 15th century and at the beginning of the 16th century. Turkey provided religious asylum to some twenty thousand of that race. They were mostly physicians, buffoons and jugglers, many of whom gained access in these capacities to the Court of Sultan Selim II. As late as the beginning of this century, Jews were still active in this field and were much in demand for festivals. At these celebrations or public performances, they performed professionally and exhibited their skill in puppetry and conjuring. It is interesting to note that these two forms were almost inseparable in Spain. *Juglares* was the general term for all wandering players of all kinds. The *jugador de manos* suggest a wandering player who combined legerdemain, puppetry and other feats in a variety show in the manner of the exiled Jewish conjurors in Turkey.²¹ Until to the present time these Jewish entertainers were using an assistant, dressed comically, and both as a conjuror and puppeteer they carried on a funny conversation, a battle of wits with their assistants. In puppet performances while the master inside the booth manipulates the puppets attached to strings, and puts in his mouth this small wind instrument, as already mentioned before in Spain it was called *pito*, the assistant stands outside the booth, holding in his hand a type of stick consisting of two flat pieces of wood fastened together, and takes part in the dialogue or directly in the action with the puppets by beating the puppets with his flat stick.

Apart from these puppets there were also a great variety of gigantic figures used in some festivals and guild processions. They were outsize effigies made of linen and hoop-frames, and represented real or mythological figures and various animals, and some of these were made with lighting devices set inside them so that they could be exhibited at night. One

²¹ See Metin And, *Magic in Istanbul* Calgary/Alberta 1978. O. 3p



Ancient puppet heads.

of the most elaborata of these large puppet-like devices is described by our German observer of the 1582 Festival: "Then was seen a monster with four heads, open jaws or mouths, of which there were always three open. It had long teeth and in the fourth mouth there was a little Turkish man between the teeth. The monster had four arms and hands, and in one it had a young maiden, which it brought up to its mouth, as if wanting to devour it. In another hand the monster held a large spear and the other two hands were placed on its hips. Everything, however, was made of hoops, and linen covered it, and it was all so very ill-proportioned that one had to laugh at it. Even though it was tall and large, still only one man carried it, who turned around once in a while" ²².

An Italian traveller to Turkey in the 17th century, Pietro della Valle, gives the following account: "At night they carry about the streets a great statue made of circles, one upon another, covered over with a piece of material, which is like its dress, in the style of the Spanish skirt which is called in Naples a *verducato*. A man climbs inside this device of circles, and carries it, making it dance a kind of sarabande, similar to the *ciacona's* of Spain. The head of this statue has two faces, one apparently of an ugly man and the other like a horned ram, and they say, without knowing the reason for it: There is the camel passing..." ²³.

The festival of 1720 gives rich material on these giant puppets both pictorially and by descriptive texts. Space does not permit me to refer to all this rich variety of giant puppets, I shall enumerate only the ones represented by the miniatures. One of them is very interesting, the giant figure clasping his hands on his chest, and having on his head four Chinese-looking smaller puppets,—while the giant one was moving forward, the smaller puppets danced in their places. (Fig. 87). The guild of cattle-butchers made a giant puppet representing a Biblical giant, wearing a long tent-like dress. His head is made of two faces, one female and the other a bearded male. The giant puppet holds a small doll. While Sultan and his entourage watch from the shore, a raft floating on water has two gigantic, bearded puppets in profile, wearing high crowned hats and floral patterned long garments. The one with a white beard holds an ornated globe while the other with a dark beard has flares sprouting from his crown and he points

²² Haunolth, p. 478.

²³ Pietro della Valle, *Viaggi...*, Roma 1650, I. pp. 110-111.



Giant puppets with two faces



Jiggling puppets performed by gypsy street showmen.

to the right (Fig. 86).

As a last item one should mention also a puppet form called *iskemle kuklası*, literally it means 'chair puppet' which was performed by gypsy street-showmen, actually it was a jiggling puppet. It consisted of one or two to four music-box figures with a string passing horizontally through their breasts from an upright post fixed on a small box or chair. When performers pulled the string the puppets moved to the music.

The rich tradition of puppetry being carried on up to the end of the 18th century was completely ousted by the Western traditions. In the 19th century two new forms emerged, one being the marionette and the other the glove puppet. The former was introduced by the English puppet-master Thomas Holden, and this kind was so much identified with Holden's name that more recent bills of marionette performances still carry his name. Holden visited Istanbul several times. The first time being in March 1882 when he presented the following skits: "Two brunettes", "Negro concert in a Paris street", "the Ascent of a balloon", "London's Crystal Palace", "In the Restaurant", Holden was very secretive, he never wanted people back-stage to learn his trade secrets. A funny event happened when his puppet Cinderella was stolen. Later it was found out that the man who stole it was an Armenian photographer who had fallen in love with Cinderella. In 1884 he gave two performances and he was also invited to the Palace theatre, but that was cancelled. In 1890 he presented in Istanbul the following: "Cinderella", "Fairy and Jinns", "Dancing Palace", "Great Moghul", "Bobby, the flyer", "The Mulligan watchmen", "Dance of Fives", "Bobby coachman and his stubborn donkey", "A terrifying night", "Two rope dancers", "A One Thousand and One Nights Dream", "A Great waterfall in a Nordic garden", "The Bobby's birth", "Cats' feast", "A night on the roof", "Snake man". On his visit in 1892 he gave several performances and in 1910 he came again and he presented "Acrobatic Dance", "Five Chinamen", "Funny drunkard", "Great Moghul", "Skeleton", "Africans' concert", "Niagara Falls with electricity".

Although Holden was very particular about not letting anybody backstage yet several Turkish puppeteers claiming to be Holden's pupils imitated his repertoire. One was Halim Bey, a musician from the Imperial Band, who was able even to perform Holden's pride 'the dance of the skeleton'. In 1896 a puppeteer called Emin Bey presented exactly the same re-



String and glove puppets.



pertoire as Holden's. He even presented ten tableaux from the One Thousand and One Nights and a dance number called La Sylphide. Next year another Turkish puppeteer by the name of Cemil Mehmet Bey presented Holden's repertoire. This way gradually the Holden style marionette became established in Turkey.

As to the glove puppetry, it stands on a middle ground between the traditional puppetry and the imported Western theatre. A similar thing happened to Ortaoyunu where, in order to compete with the newly imported Western theatre, Turkish traditional actors presented some plays borrowed from Western scripts yet acted them in an improvisatory way and also for the first time used a proscenium stage, the set consisting of painted drop, wings and borders. In the same way puppetry borrowed its plays and characters from this kind of theatre called Tuluat Theatre meaning improvisatory theatre.

This form of puppetry which shows a certain similarity to the Tuluat Theatre indicates a repertoire parallel to that of the Tuluat Theatre. The main characters in it are İbiş (Fig. 92) usually a servant, a comical character, and İhtiyar 'The Old Man' usually İbiş' master. (Fig. 93), İbiş is cunning and full of witty repartee. He wears a shapeless fez with a tassel which always swings when he moves. He often has a rough manner of speaking, aims puns, and uses obscene language and double entendres. These two characters correspond to Karagöz and Hacivat in the shadow theatre, or Kavuklu and Pişekâr in the Ortaoyunu. There are also secondary characters such as the Young Lovers, the Intriguing Major-domo who when his intrigues are unsuccessful seeks revenge. The young girl's mother and the maid who usually marries İbiş at the end of the play. The other secondary characters include Maskara (Buffoon), (Fig. 95), Çengi (dancing girl), (Fig. 93), Arap (negro), (Fig. 94), Şeytan (devil), Hafız (the man who has committed the Koran to memory), Kız (young girl), (Fig. 97), Yabancı (foreigner), Arnavut (Albanian), Hain (villain), Polis (police), Arab Şeyhi (Arab sheikh), Yahudi (Jew), Cin (jinn), Köylü (peasant) and others. Plots are freshened by continual borrowings from popular tales and legends, from plays and even from Ortaoyunu and Karagöz scripts.²⁴ The 19th century puppet theatre existed side by side with legitimate



*Turkish glove puppets
On the right İbiş and İhtiyar*



(left to right) Arab, Cadalo, İhtiyar, İbiş, young lovers, Hain (Villain), Aptal

²⁴ For more recent texts of these scripts both in Turkish and German translation see Otto Spies, *Türkisches Puppentheater*, Emsdetten/Westf., 1959.



Preparation of a village puppet.



Anatolian village puppets.

theatres in Istanbul. Even today we see sporadic performances of both kinds.

As to the folk theatre tradition, apart from the puppets used for magic purposes that we have mentioned, there is still some crude, primitive puppetry which has an individuality of its own for entertainment purposes in Anatolian villages; especially one kind is unique to my knowledge and can be seen only in Turkey, though in Yugoslavia we find something rather similar which may be due to Turkish influence.²⁵ This form is very widespread but now rare and on the verge of extinction. Perchance one may happen to come across such puppets in a remote village. Most recently I watched them in Silifke on the South coast of Anatolia, in autumn 1978. Basically this is performed as follows: A man lies on his back, covers his body with blankets and holds one puppet in each hand. (Fig. 96). Tied to his knees he has a larger puppet. He manipulates the two puppets in his hands (one man and one woman) and as they try to embrace each other he draws up his knees to bring the large puppet in between them, and prevent them from embracing. This performance usually lasts about half an hour or forty-five minutes. In *Bebek Oyunu* (The Doll Play) from Burdur, south western Anatolia, a man lies flat on a ladder held horizontally. He holds a wooden spoon painted like a doll in each hand, and a large wooden puppet tied to his knees. His body is covered with a blanket and four people carry the ladder. To the accompaniment of drum and pipe he manipulates the puppets and makes them dance. When he draws up his knees to bring the large puppet onstage, the small ones get scared and try to hide themselves. This action is repeated several times. In the same town this is played among women in a slightly different way where the puppets answer questions put by the spectators. In Çankırı (Central Anatolia) the puppeteer lies flat on a carriage. Two small puppets represent two girls, and the big puppet is an Arab (Fig. 98). In Tunceli (Eastern Turkey) it is called *Bebek* (Doll) two small puppets represent a girl and a man, and the big puppet represents a priest praying. Again in Çankırı two small puppets represent two girls from the Harem and the big one is the black eunuch. This kind of puppet has different names according to regions: *Karacör*, *Korçak*, *Hemecik* and others.

²⁵ See Niko Kuret, "La Marionette Traditionnelle des Slovenes", *Quand les Marionettes du Monde se donnent la Main...* Liège 1958, pp. 204-212; an article by Nikola Bonifacic published in *Slovenskan Etnografu* (xv (1962), pp.135-156) states that the puppets are called *Sante* and *Pante*.

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Sources of Illustrations and Acknowledgement

The colour shadow figures are from Topkapı Palace Museum Collection, except the ones on the cover and figures 1, 2, 12, 32, 33, 34, 35, 65, 66, 73, 75, 78, are cut out by one of the leading puppeteer Metin Özlen from İstanbul, Colour puppet figures 90-95 and 97 are from İstanbul Municipal Museum. Colour miniatures 86-89 are from Topkapı Palace Museum, Black and white illustrations have been drawn from author's own collection, from the Topkapı Palace Museum, from the Deutsches Leder-museum (Offenbach-am-Main), from the Museum for Volkerkunde (Hamburg), from the late Dr. Max Bührmann's private collection, and from İstanbul Municipal Museum.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Metin And is one of Turkey's most prominent and prolific scholars. He is the author of thirty-five books and more than a thousand articles on drama, dance, miniature painting, magic and ritual.

Prof. And studied drama in London after obtaining a degree in law at the University of Istanbul. Later he conducted research on the theater in the United States on a Rockefeller Fellowship. He holds a PhD from the University of Ankara where he is a Professor in the Department of Drama.

His books in Turkish include such major volumes as **Traditional Turkish Theater**, **Turkish Theater from 1839 to 1923**, **Ottoman Theater**, **Turkish Theater from 1923 to 1973**, **Byzantine Theater** (which is the second work ever of its kind in any language), and **Games and Magic** (one of the best studies available in any language). His study of shadow plays in Turkey and throughout the world is probably the most comprehensive study of its kind.

Prof. And has published many other works including studies of the Turk in European drama, opera and ballet, of Ottoman festivities, of Dionysus and the Anatolian peasant, and of Turkish peasant dances.

His *History of the Traditional Turkish Theater* won the coveted award of the Turkish Language Society in 1970.

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Metin And has travelled extensively in the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and North America, giving lectures and doing research. His contributions have appeared in many books, encyclopedias, journals and collections in numerous countries.

For many years he served on the three-member dramaturgical board of the Turkish State Theaters. In 1950s and 1970s he was a performing arts critic for some of Turkey's leading newspapers and art magazines. His programs were frequently broadcast on the Turkish radio network. He has also served as Editor of **Forum**, one of Turkey's major intellectual journals.

Prof. And has conducted extensive research about the dances of Anatolia and their origins. He has also studied the rituals of the Whirling Dervishes and other sects of Islamic mysticism.

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